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**Community Art and Public-School Partnership: A case study of the
participation of one public-school art program with the East Austin
Studio Tour**

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Abstract

Community Art and Public-School Partnership: A case study of the participation of one public-school art program with the East Austin Studio Tour

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2021

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This thesis examines the benefits for teachers and students when they participate in community art initiatives, especially the East Austin Studio Tour (EAST) in Austin, Texas. This study examines how this partnership can strengthen the bonds of the community and create a sense of place for the teachers and students involved. EAST is “a free, annual self-guided art event spanning two weekends in November. EAST provides opportunities for the public to meet the artists of Austin in their creative spaces” (Big Medium, 2019). Schools are welcomed to partner with EAST and participate in the art show case each year. This thesis focuses on Kealing Middle School's art program's participation. Kealing Middle School is located in East Austin. Interviews were the primary data collection tools used and interviews were conducted with the art teacher from Kealing Middle School, one student from Kealing Middle School, and the executive director of Big Medium, the organization that produces EAST. Data was collected

between August 2020 and December 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic and social distance protocols changed some aspects of the original plan for this research and some forms of data were not able to be collected. The results of this study were derived from coded interview data and personal experience. Data analysis found that students and teachers do receive benefits when the art program partners with community art initiatives, including a heightened sense of community and a feeling of belonging. I hope this research can add to the field of art education and provide evidence for schools to partner with community events and initiatives in the future.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

INTRODUCTION

How can involvement in a community art program instill a sense of place? Can a public-school art program's participation in a city-wide art show promote a greater sense of community? This case study examines how a partnership between a public school and a community art program can be implemented in order to strengthen the bonds of the community and create a sense of place for the teachers and students involved, specifically examining Kealing Middle School and the East Austin Studio Tour (EAST). It also explores the question of whether students and teachers feel a heightened sense of place while involved in a community arts program. This study includes interviews with the art teacher, a student, and the executive director of Big Medium, the non-profit organization that produces EAST yearly.

Prior to this research there have been studies regarding how art programs can create a sense of place (Neves & Graham, 2018), and studies exploring how community art programs can foster stronger community bonds (Villeneuve & Sheppard, 2009; Lawton, 2019). The purpose of the current study is to fill a gap in current research by demonstrating how a community art program and art school programs can work together to benefit teachers and students

Central Research Question

What benefits do art teachers and their students who attend Kealing Middle school experience from their participation in a community art program, specifically the East Austin Studio Tour, and do those teachers and students experience a sense of place from being involved?

Definition of Terms

Community Based Art Education (CBAE) - CBAE is a multifaceted form of art education which generally promotes purposeful engagement to or with a community. Lawton (2019) described community-based art education as, “art education [that] takes place in both educational institutions and communities. It provides opportunities for participants to develop art skills while learning from one another about their community as situated in the larger context, and by building meaningful connections through artistic collaborations that inspire personal, social, and communal transformation” (p. 206).

East Austin Studio Tour (EAST) – “a free, annual self-guided art event spanning two weekends in November. EAST provides opportunities for the public to meet the artists of Austin in their creative spaces” (Big Medium, 2019). EAST was started with the intention to create a stronger artist community in East Austin, to give artists a place to network with other artists and a wider audience, and to allow artists to invite others into their studio. This experience allows individuals to see and engage with various artists' work to better understand where their art is made, how it's made, and learn more about their creative practice. At the time of its start, the founders (Little, Swec, and Phillips) felt there was not enough gallery space or opportunities for artists to show their

work in Austin. According to Little (personal communication, December 7, 2020) the gallery environment is known to be a "white, cube...space, that sort of austere environment where art kind of sits in this weird place, that isn't exactly the warmest" (personal communication, December 7, 2020). In 2019, around 550 artists were involved (Little, personal communication, December 7, 2020).

Sense of place – A strengthened feeling of belonging to the community and place where one resides. Gradle (2007) expands that having a sense of place is more than just about being from a location, but it is also about being *of* that place. Having a feeling of belonging to the community and culture, taking part in the local customs and traditions, a “rootedness” (Neves & Graham, 2018).

Community engagement - Community engagement is the action of an exchange between a person, group, or organization within a community. Objects, discussions, and social or environmental improvements could be a form of exchange.

EAST AUSTIN

History of East Austin

The 1928 City Plan was created by Austin city planners in conjunction with consulting engineers Koch and Fowler of Dallas had a lasting impact on East Austin (Trowbridge, 2014). This plan lays out where the city planners intended for non-whites, especially African Americans, to live. The story of the 1928 City Plan begins with a 1917 Supreme Court decision, *Buchanan v. Warley*. This case originated in Louisville, Kentucky, where a white man sold an African American man a house, however at this time in Louisville, an ordinance existed which prohibited black families from living

within a neighborhood which was majority white. The case was filed because a white man sold the house to an African American man; unfortunately, this neighborhood housed eight white families to two African American families (Buchanan v. Warley, 1917). The Supreme Court found, "the Civil Rights Act of 1866 and the Fourteenth Amendment "[assured] to the colored race the enjoyment of all the civil rights ...enjoyed by white persons" Louisville's interest was not justified as it would, "deny rights created or protected by the Federal Constitution" (Buchanan v. Warley, 1917).

The Buchanan v. Warley decision prevented city planners in Austin from creating legislation and city plans which intentionally segregated the city due to race. However, in 1927, city planners began to devise a plan which would force the small neighborhoods of non-whites occurring in areas outside of East Austin in order to create a downtown and central area which was majority white run, white owned, and white enjoyed (Phillips, 2018). In 1927, 15 freedman communities existed in Austin (Houston, 2018). Freedman communities housed African American, Hispanic, and poor white families and were spread throughout the city, including the downtown area and the neighborhoods directly west of downtown. The largest community of African American families was located on the east side of Austin, and specifically east of East Avenue and south of the city cemetery, with many being descendants of former slaves (Houston, 2018). While it was not legal for the city planners to enact plans which advanced segregation, they included the following statement within the 1928 city plan:

In our studies in Austin we have found that the negroes are present in small numbers, in practically all sections of the city, excepting the area just east of East Avenue and south of the City Cemetery. This area seems to be all negro

population. It is our recommendation that the nearest approach to the solution of the race segregation problem will (be) the recommendation of this district as a negro district; and that all facilities and conveniences be provided the negroes in this district, as an incentive to draw the negro population to this area. This will eliminate the necessity of duplication of white and black schools, white and black parks, and other duplicate facilities for this area. (Koch & Fowler, 1928, p. 57)

Austin city planners, at that time, claimed these plans were put in place in order to avoid duplicating facilities such as public schools and parks. Non-whites living outside East Austin were pushed out via various methods. These methods were harsh and included refusal of rent to non-whites in the Central and Western areas of Austin. Additionally, landlords disconnected utilities and refused to turn them back on to force some tenants out (Trowbridge, 2014). Furthermore, the city allowed developers to purchase non-white-owned properties at cheap costs, forcing tenants to relocate (Gregor, 2010; Houston, 2018). The east side was not as attractive as other areas of town as there was a lack of parks, sidewalks, and other planned recreational areas as compared to other areas in Austin (Gregor, 2010). Another issue with the east side of Austin included the fact that much of its area was zoned industrially because it was the city's most undesired land. Many landfills and other industrial businesses and factories were located there, such as the Pure Casting Company which remained a problem until 2017 (Gregor, 2010; Undoing Racism, n.d.).

Pure Casting Company is a precision casting company which casts with ferrous and non-ferrous materials (Pure Casting Company, 2021). At one point in its' history, the Pure Casting facility was located across the street from Zavala Elementary School. The problem associated with its' location was that Pure Casting dumped around 220 pounds of

toxic waste per month and spewed the fumes into the air, toxins that students, families, and educators were breathing in on a daily basis (Undoing Racism, n.d.). Many semi-trucks also traveled to and from the facility, further spewing toxins into the East Austin community (Undoing Racism, n.d.). After 49 years in East Austin, Pure Casting Company was relocated to Lockhart, Texas (Pure Casting Company, 2021).

While the Austin city plan of 1928 and related actions were unethical and in violation of the Supreme Court precedent, they worked. By 1932, a majority of African American families in Austin had relocated to the area east of East Avenue, now Interstate Highway 35, and south of the city cemetery (see Figure 1.1) (Zehr, 2012). Prior to 1928, the largest African American school was located in Wheatsville, a freedmen's community located just north of downtown Austin. The relocation of many African American families in the years after 1928 forced the school in Wheatsville to close after serving the community for 60 years (Phillips, 2012). The city of Austin named this area the "Negro District", now known by the city as District 1 (Houston, 2018). In 2012, the area was the first district to receive the Texas Commission on the Arts title, "African American Cultural Heritage District" (Phillips, 2012).

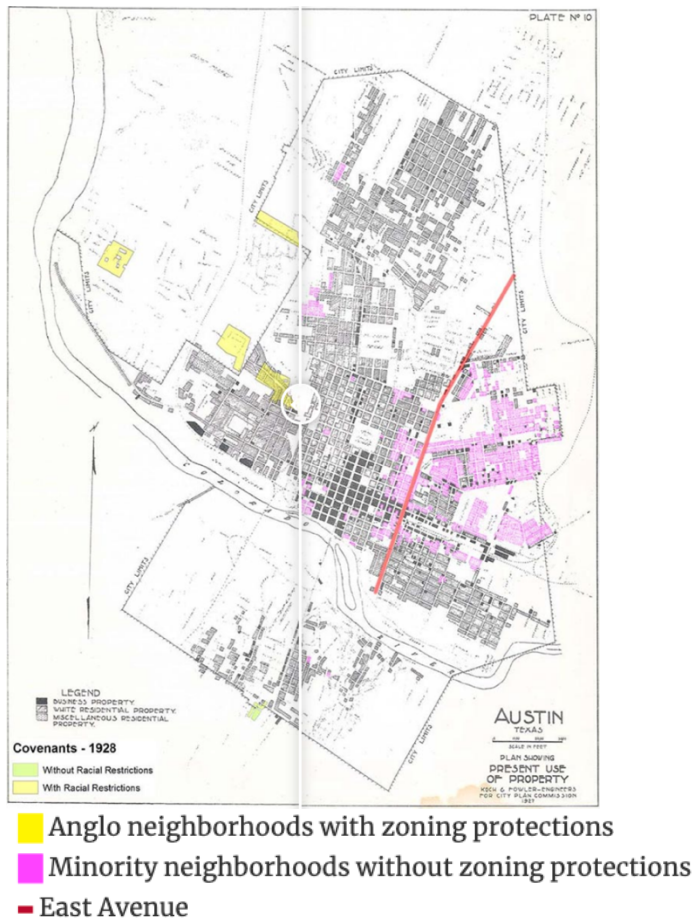


Figure 1.1: 1928 Austin City Plan (Zehr, 2012).

In subsequent years, Austin continued to move non-whites to the east side of town, including a plan to build the first federally funded housing project called the Santa Rita Courts in 1950 (Trowbridge, 2014). The city's plan was to "combat slums and blight" on the east side (Gregor, 2010). This housing project was intended to help house Latinos and low-income residents. It was the first of many housing projects planned by the city to be built in East Austin (Trowbridge, 2014).

Consequently, evidence of both the African American and Latino community are still present in East Austin today. Black businesses built over the years post-1928 can be observed by the few remaining local BBQ restaurants, corner stores, and other long standing African American owned establishments. Additionally, one can witness the Hispanic influence in East Austin due to the push for Latino communities to relocate to this area in the 1950s from the many taquerias, piñata shops, and Hispanic owned gas stations sprinkled throughout the area (Zehr, 2012).

La Lotería Mural

The La Lotería mural is located at 1619 E. Cesar Chavez Street, near Chalmers Avenue in east Austin. It has been a beloved fixture in the community since 1989, taking a few months hiatus in 2016. The mural highlights local history and cultural traditions of Mexican Americans who until recent gentrification populated the majority of the east side of Austin (Barrios, 2018). The mural was painted by a group of East Austin artists, and it represented the card game, La Lotería. La Lotería is a beloved card game similar to Bingo and is frequently played amongst Latino friends and families (Barragan, 2018). In 2016, South by Southwest employed mural artists to create a new mural where La Lotería had existed for 27 years. The community felt as if they were being pushed away from their roots due to gentrification and voiced their concerns loudly, so loudly in fact, that the festival donated \$12,000 towards the restoration of the mural (Barragan, 2018).

Arte Texas, nine Austin artists, and six Austin high school students worked together to restore the beloved La Lotería mural (Barrios, 2018). It was repainted with most of the original content but with newly added features to reflect the growth and

change within the community over the years. Raymond Robledo, one of the local artists, painted a heart with his son's name etched inside as a tribute to his lost battle with childhood cancer (Barragan, 2018b). Felipe Garza, another Austin artist, wanted to include political messages depicting the gentrification of East Austin, and included a bulldozer and piñata to represent the destruction of a long-standing piñata shop and a fence which represents the U.S.-Mexico border (Barragan, 2018b). Another artist, Oscar 'Tez' Cortez, wanted to include the "Keep Austin Weird" culture and painted a blind salamander, an endangered species specific to Austin (Barragan, 2018b). This community mural is symbolic of the importance of community and how art can preserve history, as well as how collaboration within a neighborhood can demand change in order to preserve their culture.

Gentrification

The displacement of African Americans and Hispanic people began with the 1928 Austin city council Master Plan which moved both groups eastward of East Avenue, now I-35 (Gregor, 2010). Dictionary.com (n.d.) defines gentrification as "the buying and renovation of houses and stores in deteriorated urban neighborhoods by upper- or middle-income families or individuals improving property values but often displacing low-income families and small businesses". Although the buildings and businesses located in east Austin have typically been quaint, interest in the area began increasing in the 2000's as people began to realize the benefits of living there. These benefits included low rent, easy access to downtown, the ability to walk and bike between home and work, and a strong sense of community. Although there are still industrial zones, the airport, lack of

sidewalks, and toxic factories located in East Austin, the predominantly African American and Hispanic community have been slowly becoming displaced as an influx of young, more affluent white citizens move in. (Trowbridge, 2014).

In 1999, the city planners once again made plans to change east Austin, this time from "blighted to trendy" (Ji & Lin, 2014), with plans to redevelop the area and include more mixed-use buildings. This plan was meant to encourage a new kind of "Austinite" to live on the east side. Many citizens born and raised on the east side of Austin now find themselves moving to Riverside, south of the river, to Round Rock or Pflugerville, both 30-45 minutes away, or out of the Austin area completely (Malibiran, 2019). In 2017, Realtor.com called Austin the 10th fastest gentrifying city in the nation, with most of that gentrification happening on the east and south sides of town.

One developmental project which has had a large impact on the east side is the Saltillo District, which is located between East 4th and 5th streets and runs from Interstate Highway 35 to Attayac Street (see Figure 1.2). It contains a grocery store, retail and restaurant spaces, offices, and residential areas. Figuring out where to place the displaced is one challenge that comes with the development of such projects. Projects like the Saltillo District have the potential to, and likely will, increase the land value. This causes property taxes to rise, resulting in a significant problem for those who have lived in the east side their entire lives. Change is necessary; however, those at risk of being displaced

deserve to be protected.



Figure 1.2: Plaza Saltillo Conceptual Plan (Galligan, 2015).

EAST AUSTIN STUDIO TOUR

The East Austin Studio Tour (EAST) was started in 2003 by artists Shea Little, Jana Swec, and Joseph Phillips in their East Austin home and studio. The three rented a home together at 5305 Bolm Road, and began working on their individual art, but often found themselves collaborating on each other's work. Naturally, they began to investigate where to show their completed work and thought, "why not here, in our studio?". At the time, there were not many opportunities for artists to show their work in Austin as there were many more artists working than galleries to showcase their work. Galleries also can pose an elitist attitude when viewing art, due to its "white, cube space... and austere environment" (Little, personal communication, December 7, 2020).

The three artists decided to use their living room as a showroom, inviting other artists in East Austin to join in an artist studio open house. The artists banded together,

created a map of the studios, and promoted the first East Austin Studio Tour. The first tour which, had 28 artists involved, has grown over the years to include about 550 artists today (Little, personal communication, December 7, 2020). In 2007, the founders organized the non-profit organizational group Big Medium, the group that now organizes EAST, with Shea Little as the executive director. They also organized another show called WEST, which carries the same characteristics of EAST to boundaries on the west side of Austin.

EAST is advertised as a "free, annual self-guided art event spanning two weekends in November. It provides opportunities for the public to meet the artists of Austin in their creative spaces" (Big Medium, 2019). The original boundaries for the Tour in 2003 were east of I-35, north of Lady Bird Lake, and west of Airport Road (see Figure 1.3). The boundaries have expanded over the years to accommodate more artists, some of whom have been displaced due to gentrification. The problem of gentrification is an issue which EAST has helped exacerbate due to increased exposure of the creative people who live and work in East Austin. This area includes District 1, the area city planners in 1928 deemed fit for non-whites, especially African Americans. Current EAST boundaries are similar but have expanded to include artists who may have been displaced due to the rising costs of housing on the east side associated with gentrification. The current boundaries are still east I-35, but now they reach up to south and west of Highway 183, and north of Riverside Drive (see Figure 1.4). These new boundaries expand the tour further north and south, including the Riverside neighborhood south of

the Lady Bird Lake. The expanding boundaries of EAST reflect a growing population in the city of Austin.

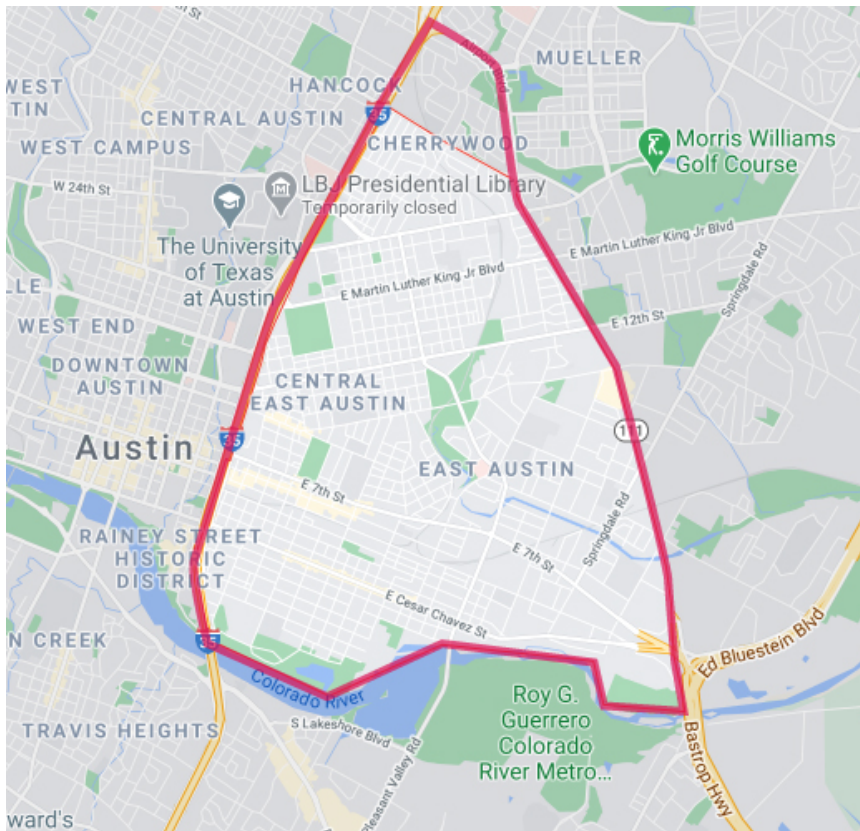


Figure 1.3: Original EAST Boundaries

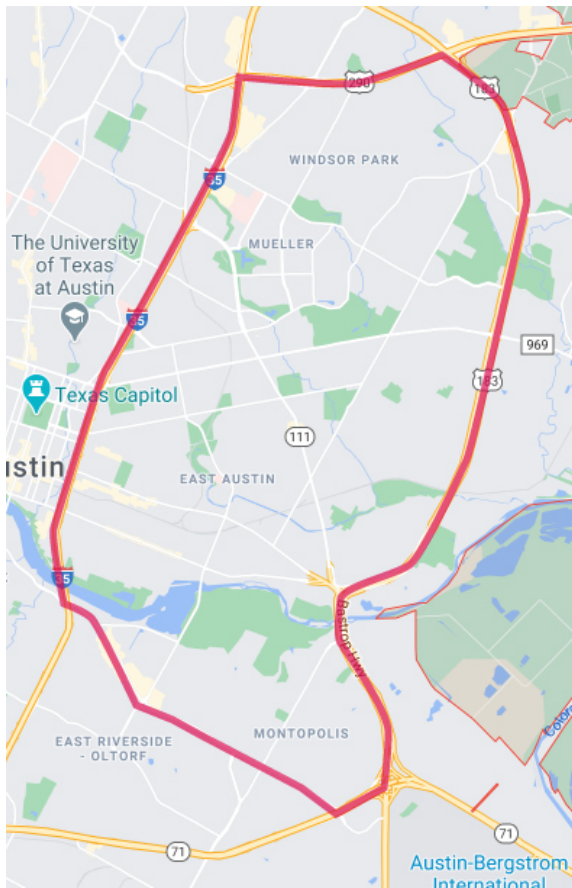


Figure 1.4: Current EAST Boundaries

Although most of the artists who participate in the Studio Tour pay an application fee, Big Medium offers other routes to lower barriers for those artists who desire to participate but cannot afford to pay the application fee. Group exhibitions are allowed to enable groups of art to split the application fee. Big Medium also works with Capital View Arts, an organization which focuses on helping artists of color exhibit their work. Artists who work with Capital View Arts do not have to pay the application fee to exhibit their work during the showcase. Another option for artists to exhibit their work without paying a fee is to show their art at one of the participating Austin Public Libraries located

within the EAST boundaries. Additionally, Big Medium works with the Carver Museum, which works to preserve African American heritage, material culture, and art works. As an organization, Big Medium strives to work with other community leaders in order to bring art to a wide and diverse audience. Involving a diverse audience of artists and spectators is Big Medium's method of promoting a sense of belonging and inclusivity to all members of the community.

Goals of EAST

The goals of EAST and Big Medium are to provide networking and community opportunities for artists living and working in Austin. Big Medium organizes two studio tour events annually, EAST and WEST, which covers a large area of Austin. Any artist who lives, works, or has a showing of their artwork within the boundaries of either or both shows is welcome to submit an application to join either or both tours. The main goals of Big Medium are to provide a comfortable environment where the public can meet and have conversations with artists about their creative practice, how their work is made, and do so in the place where the work is made. Another goal is to provide support to artists through networking and artistic community.

Funding

The funding for Big Medium, which is responsible for organizing the East Austin Studio Tour, largely comes from the artist application fees. The EAST application fee is currently \$175 per artist. That money goes towards creating and printing materials, including a map of all participating studios. Funding also comes from the sale of

advertisements within the nearly 200 paged catalog, which is produced for each year's show. This catalog details each artist, their work, and the location of each participating studio. Other funding comes from corporate sponsors, including Tito's Handmade Vodka, The Myrtle Agnew Walker (MAW) Gallery, and The Austin Chronicle, as well as business partners which is comprised of local boutiques, restaurants and shops. Other sponsors are from the Big Medium membership program, which allows the public to earn their own catalog and a sneak peek into all Big Medium art shows. Big Medium, a non-profit focused on the arts in central Texas, also receives funding from the city of Austin through the Cultural Arts Division, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Texas Commission on the Arts. (Big Medium, 2019).

Community Connection

One of the missions of Big Medium is to bring as many people to the world of art as possible. Little said, "we believe [that] to be a progressive, tolerant, empathetic society, art has to be incorporated into people's daily lives" (personal communication, December 7, 2020). The main mission of EAST is to bring as many people as possible out to experience art, have conversations with the artists, and view art in a casual environment. It is meant to create a sense of place in the art community and to bring the artist community to the local population. Little considers the artwork shown during EAST to be community art, because "it's meant to be as representative of the community as it possibly can be" (personal communication, December 7, 2020). A visitor attending EAST will likely see many difference types and thematic elements depicted in the art which is displayed in a multitude of methods, visually implying the similarities and

differences between artists who work within East Austin. The art ranges from illustrated graphic images to jewelry to hand carved furniture; art is painted, collaged, projected, installed and more.

There are distinct differences between art festivals and the East Austin Studio Tour. In Austin, there are several art festivals which occur through the year, including the Pecan Festival and Art City Austin. Little considers these experiences to be different from EAST in a few ways. When attending these city art festivals, the experience is similar to attending a fair. There is art, but art of the craft variety, and you may or may not meet the artists showing and selling their work. There are also other attractions, typically food and drink vendors and often a stage with live music. Attending an art festival is more about taking and consuming rather than sharing and exchanging. Entering an art festival, you can have a better preconceived idea of what you are going to experience, but with EAST you never know. With over 600 studios and exhibitions, each participants' EAST experience is likely to be different. There are many variables present, including the geographic location of where individuals may visit, the artists one may meet and speak with, and the art which is experienced.

While EAST holds advantages for parts of the community, it poses disadvantages for other parts of the community. The annual art showcase has boosted the gentrification taking place in east Austin. Little noted, "it's no secret that developers follow artists...so to say that the artists gentrified East Austin is incorrect, but to say that we were not a part of it is also incorrect" (personal communication, December 7, 2020). EAST is a creative

event, and many corporations are interested in being located in creative cities. EAST and WEST are not the only events drawing artists and tourists to Austin, other city-wide events contribute to the creative class of the city, such as Austin City Limits Festival and South by Southwest. The changes in east Austin over the years have affected the studio tour, Little said, "we don't stand to gain from gentrification, we actually stand to lose and suffer from it...but we are passively involved in that process" (personal communication, December 7, 2020). Complicit in their role in the relocation of minorities and changes city-wide, Big Medium actively participates in conversations about displacement and continues to update the boundaries to include displaced artists.

School Participation in EAST

Partnerships between schools, community and families are important for students' learning and development as well as their long-term success (Epstein, 2011). EAST provides a yearly opportunity for east Austin schools to participate. Any and all schools that are within the EAST or WEST boundaries are welcome and encouraged to join the tours. Typically, the schools which have participated in the past have an art teacher who has personally been involved in the Studio Tours, practices art regularly, or is informed of Big Medium and the Studio Tours. After making contact with Big Medium and coordinating logistics, schools are able to participate for free. At least nine schools, including elementary, middle and one East Austin University have participated in the events.

AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT (AISD)

The Austin Independent School District was formed in 1955 as a means to shed the responsibility of running the public-school system from the city government to a Board of Trustees. Public schools in the Austin area were originally segregated, keeping African and Hispanic students in their own schools, separate from white students (Cuban, 2008). The Supreme court decision in *Brown v the Board of Education* (1954) made it unconstitutional for segregation to continue in public schools. Additionally, the Civil Rights Act (1964) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) were signed into federal law by Texas' own Lyndon B. Johnson. Despite this, Austin was slow to update their school system (Cuban, 2008). Serious steps to desegregate Austin's school started in the 1970s. It is still alleged that specific AISD schools receive separate and unequal treatment, especially those located in East Austin. (Cuban, 2008).

Two AISD schools and one university who have participated in the East Austin Studio Tour during the past six years were originally designated to serve only their African American student populations. Those schools are Huston-Tillotson University, Blackshear Elementary (originally Gregory) and Kealing Middle School (formerly Junior High School). Kealing was closed in the 1970's as a means to help desegregate other Austin public-schools. It was reopened in the 1980s as a magnet school to attract a more diverse student population (Cuban, 2008).

In the 2019-2020 school year, Kealing Middle School's student demographics included the following population statistics: African American, 10.1%; Hispanic, 34.8%;

White, 34.7%; Asian, 14.9%, American Indian, 0.1%, and two or more races 5.3%. Other figures provided by the AISD website about Kealing Middle claim that 35.2% of their student population are economically disadvantaged, 10.1% are English Language Learners (ELL) and that 9.1% of the population receive Special Education (SPED) services. The average State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) test scores are between 84-90% in all categories (AISD, 2020).

PERSONAL CONNECTIONS TO THE RESEARCH

Growing up, my favorite festival was the Des Moines Art Festival, located in Des Moines, Iowa. The annual festival would include a kid's area where children could create art to take home, and an area where everyone was welcome to participate in a large community artwork. Each year the festival proudly showcased students' art from selected schools. My school was not one of those schools involved, but I remember the envy I felt for those students whose work was on display. From that point, my ambition was to show my art to an audience as large as the Des Moines Art Festival.

During my senior year of college, I got the opportunity. I was selected as an "Emerging Iowa Artist" by the Des Moines Art Festival committee and was given my own booth along with 19 other college-enrolled artists. I worked feverishly for months preparing many paintings to show and sell during the one weekend in June when the festival annually occurs. I made so many connections with people I had never met and experienced an overwhelming emotion that I was a part of something larger than myself.

I felt a strong attachment to Des Moines and its art community. I felt a true sense of place.

Upon moving to Austin, I discovered the East Austin Studio Tours and my heart soared. I volunteered for Big Medium for a couple of years, helping them to set up and tear down the EAST artist showcase as well as helping with various events during the two-weekend event which takes place annually in November. In 2017, I submitted an artist application and was accepted, and was hopeful to find that sense of place again in Austin. I exhibited my paintings as an official EAST artist for two years. It felt like I had found the art community I was searching for, and the sense of place that I craved. In my opinion, EAST is a great program that does an enormous amount of community outreach and I was thrilled to discover that they have schools involved in their yearly art showcase.

As a preservice art educator, my personal motivations for research are guided by my ruminations of a future career, my experiences with community art programs that occurred in my childhood, and my participation in community art events as a young adult. As a preservice art educator, one of my prevalent notions of a fulfilling career in teaching is having my public-school partner with other community organizations, in order to showcase what students are learning in the art classroom. I have high expectations for my future students with the hope that they will have opportunities to participate in community art events.

According to Epstein (2011), partnership between students, families and the community allows all parties to share information, thereby guiding the children's learning and development and creating an environment where students feel in charge of their

learning. Implementing an environment where students are involved with family and community will allow the students to feel like important members of their community. My goal as an educator is to impart an appetite for life-long learning to my students. According to Dewey (1938), effective learning is conducted through a series of social experiences, which are more impactful for future recall, allowing the students to be engaged in their learning. I hope to help establish a sense of place for my students as well as facilitate learning experiences for them through the participation in community art activities.

Students who are involved in after-school community art activities are able to feel like contributing artists in their community, and they are able to translate the skills they learned through art to other academic subjects (Green & Kindseth, 2001). My intention is to create an art room atmosphere that allows students to be recognized by their community for their achievements. With this research, I can show evidence of the importance of community art program partnership with public-schools and provide an opportunity for students to be active within their community and to feel like important contributors to their place of residence.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

COMMUNITY-BASED ART EDUCATION

Community-based art education (CBAE) is a wide-ranging form of art education that occurs in a variety of settings and can be conducted with participants of all ages and abilities (Lawton, 2019; Ulbricht, 2005). The inclusive nature of CBAE provides a rich learning environment and can “enable the development of meaningful relationships that leave an indelible impact” (Lawton, 2019, p. 216). CBAE can occur in schools, but often occurs in a non-school environment (Grauer, Castro & Lin, 2012; Lawton, 2019; Pedraza, 2010; Ulbricht, 2005), or an after-school program (Green & Kindseth, 2001; Ulbricht, 2005). CBAE encapsulates many different facets, including but not limited to artmaking, collaboration, empowerment of citizens, ownership, identity associated with the community, and social action.

One strength of CBAE is the integration of partnerships between parents, students and community (Green & Kindseth, 2001; Woywood & Deal, 2016). This aligns with the idea of collaboration between students, educators, and artists who usually take part in CBAE experiences (Epstein, 2011; Grauer, Castro, & Lin; Lawton, 2019; Pedraza, 2010; Villeneuve & Sheppard, 2009). A collaborative working and learning environment “provides opportunities for participants to develop art skills while learning from one another and their community as situated in the larger context, and by building meaningful connections through artistic collaborations that inspire personal, social, and communal

transformation” (Lawton, 2019, p. 206). Many successful community-based art education projects are inspired by the successes and challenges of the community in which the project resides, compelling participants and onlookers to gain a sense of awareness regarding the community (Pedraza, 2010; Villeneuve & Sheppard, 2009). One example of this is the “La Lotería” mural located in East Austin explained in Chapter 1.

In order to accomplish successful collaboration, CBAE "involves locating a community with which to collaborate, addressing the interests and needs of the community, and finding a community connector, who is someone with fluid entry into the community with which the artist-educator wishes to work" (Lawton, 2019, p. 210). Lawton (2019) also mentioned that participants from the community are necessary to have full community collaboration.

Mentors and staff from a CBAE program in Canada that focused on new media within art camps reported that working in this manner allowed them to "see themselves as creating a place for both personal and collective inquiry through developing skills of communication and collaboration" (Grauer, Castro, & Lin, 2012, p. 144). This same group also reported that "the collaborative nature of community is significant in affirming and cultivating alternative ways of knowing" (Grauer, Castro, & Lin, 2012, p. 148). Mentors and staff from the Gulf Islands Film and Television School (GIFTS) noted that when students were allowed to work within a community setting, exciting projects developed due to the influence of the place, their peers, and the freedom to express themselves freely.

Community-based art education has roots in interdisciplinary education due to its nature, which combines art skills with knowledge of the community. Adejumo (2000) stated "integrating the art curriculum with community-based knowledge would provide a diversified education and contribute to the social and cultural development of youth" (p.13). Furthermore, students seem to "enjoy using art to investigate new ideas and interdisciplinary topics" (Neves & Graham, 2018, p. 37). In this way, CBAE is enjoyable to students and provides them with interdisciplinary learning, furthering their connections between school subjects and their connection to community. Possible interdisciplinary subjects include, but are not limited to: the environment, economy, history, architecture and literary significance.

“Many community-based artists are concerned with art that functions in different types of public arenas” (Ulbricht, 2005, p. 9). The subject matter of community public works is often reflective of unique and individual nuances specific to that place (Pedraza, 2010). Adejumo (2000) defined community-based art as "a term...to describe works of art produced by people living within the same locality, and defined by common interests such as shared concerns, cultural heritage, traditions and language patterns" (p. 12). In successful CBAE, "participating community members often engage in artistic practices that allow them to celebrate and enhance their beliefs and values. The beliefs and values are never static but change over time" (Congdon, 2004, p.2) Congdon (2004) also explained that CBAE programs "encourage us to recognize and celebrate local customs and local artists and their work. These programs help develop an active citizenry and promote a connection between art and life as they help us understand and build on local

history" (p. 48). Villeneuve & Sheppard (2009) noted "by studying art and the community, students open themselves to a meaningful new world close to home" (p. 12). These traits may promote safer neighborhoods as they encourage more active and awareness in citizens.

CBAE creates a safe place to approach complex issues, so that students can be "better prepared . . . to face complex issues as adults" (Woywood & Deal, 2016). Bains & Mesa-Bains (2002) stated "if we reach young people, particularly in their adolescence, perhaps they will eventually be able to give voice to their own community" (p, 184). This statement illustrates the importance of CBAE programs for middle and high school pupils.

Students who participate in CBAE programs have the potential to become leaders and activists in their communities (Green & Kindseth, 2001; Lawton, 2019). Green & Kindseth found that "regular examples of leadership occur when students who acquire a skill seek out opportunities to share their expertise and insights with other students within a course" (2001, p. 339).

"Community-based art education is an area within art education in which creative community engagement, service-learning, and social practice in art intersect" (Lawton, 2019, p. 206). Therefore, CBAE is an opportunity for conducting students to create artwork that is aware of social injustices and concerns (Lawton, 2019). "Artist" is a term that Lawton (2019) used to describe artists who, "inform the public through visual art, social media, creative writing, and performance about inequalities" (p. 206). Including a community-based approach into the art curriculum can "provide opportunities

for positive social change and foster social consciousness" (Lawton, 2019, p. 216) for students.

Community-based projects have the tendency to change as projects develop due to several relative factors. As a result, the participants may develop skills in flexibility from the planning and facilitation of projects (Grauer, Castro, & Lin, 2012; Green & Kindseth, 2001; Lawton, 2019). In fact, Lawton (2019) stated "flexibility is key to effective community-based art education experiences" (p. 210). CBAE projects typically involve a group of people, each having an individual perspective and skill set. Successful collaboration requires patience, understanding and flexibility to refine ideas while working with available materials and time provided for the final product. Teachers must foster a sense of flexibility and democratic modes for education within the community setting so that all voices and viewpoints may be heard and represented (Grauer, Castro, & Lin, 2012).

Perhaps the most convenient place for CBAE programs to take place is within after school art programs. Green & Kindseth (2001) found, "Afterschool art programs... aim to improve students' technical and artistic skills and... value craftsmanship and design". While CBAE after school art programs could be beneficial for any and all ages, many are aimed at adolescent learners (Grauer, Castro, & Lin, 2012; Green & Kindseth, 2001; Ulbricht, 2005).

Artmaking

One of the main purposes of art instruction in the public school is to impart technical art making skills and community-based art education provides these skills as

well (Green & Kindseth, 2001; Grauer, Castro, & Lin, 2012; Lawton, 2019; Neves & Graham, 2018; Ulbricht, 2005; Woywood & Deal, 2016). CBAE "emphasizes where art learning is taking place and focuses mainly on experience of the community" (Villeneuve & Sheppard, 2009, p. 6). Villeneuve & Sheppard also noted that "CBAE provides numerous possibilities for ... students to flourish in art curriculum relative to their real-life experience ...[and] this approach to art education effectively provides art content with a backdrop of familiar and reachable material" (2009, p. 12).

According to Congdon (2004), "art clearly has the ability to educate and engage people to think about community-based concern while providing them with a space to help find solutions" (p. 43.) With this in mind, students are inspired to create meaningful art. Screen printing, mural creation, performance art and collage are a few of the art techniques which can be utilized in CBAE (Gradle, 2007; Lawton, 2019; Pedraza, 2010; Villeneuve & Sheppard, 2009; Woywood & Deal, 2016). CBAE gives students the "opportunity to use their art skills to deal with the world through art" (Ulbricht, 2005, p. 11).

At its root, CBAE provides the opportunity for participants to be self-expressive (Grauer, Castro, & Lin, 2012; Green & Kindseth, 2001). Students are allowed the freedom to critically analyze the state and condition of their community to create art that shares unique messages about their perception of their community. One example is the work that Street Level Youth Media is promoting their students to create.

Street Level Youth Media is a media-focuses non-profit located in Chicago that encourages youth to create art and participate in community activism through art to keep

students away from gang-related activity. For one project, student artists collaborated with professional artist to design and create anti-gun violence billboard. The artists discussed the topic of gun violence and how it personally impacted them. From those discussion, the students were able to guide the final design of the billboards, projecting their voice into the Chicago area using art (Searcy, 2005). This is an example of how community art created in CBAE programs allows for participants to have an active voice within their community (Ulbricht, 2005).

Congdon (2004) stated that there are multiple ways in which artists and CBAE can create a connection between the people of a community and the environment in which they reside, saying, "artists can help us understand our relationship to our varies and connected environmental experiences" (p. 12). She also noted that CBAE has the ability to create "connections to the local culture and environment" (Congdon, 2004, p. 6). Neves & Graham highlighted that by teaching curriculum focused on a specific place, such as the local community, students are able to "develop deeper understandings of the creative process and its connections to the natural world" (2018, p. 37).

A natural byproduct of CBAE is reciprocal learning. Bains & Mesa Bains (2002) found that CBAE created a mobius loop of learning as the students and educators were learning more about the community, and other's experiences within that community. This reciprocal learning, "deepened transformative art practices" (Bains & Mesa-Bains, 2002, p. 184). Dewey (1938) claimed that by creating art in and about community, all parties are able to learn just from having that experience of creating art.

When an art educator is not just a teacher, but an artist as well, it can make a profound impact in the art classroom for it allows the students to be able to see themselves as artists too (Neves & Graham, 2018). By demonstrating that even artists go through many phases within the creation of an artwork, students feel more comfortable about not creating a perfectly finished product during their first try and learn that there are many steps involved in the process. Going through this process with students allows them to "think of themselves as 'real artists' (Neves & Graham, 2018, p. 41).

CBAE has been considered a form of art that can heal (Bains & Mesa-Bains, 2002). Many communities have experienced some form of tragedy or loss, Bains & Mesa-Bains (2002) noted:

Art educators can help students recognize how people from all walks of life can use art and an artistic mind to deal with hardship, tragedy, crime, traffic, and other personal and environmental issues. As we participate in well-thought-out artistic responses to our daily lives, we are able to transform our surroundings, and as a result, transform the way we feel about our communities and ourselves. (p. 37).

Inclusivity

The inclusive nature of CBAE leads to a rich learning environment (Lawton, 2019). Generally, CBAE "is defined broadly as something that takes place outside of K-12 schools" (Ulbricht, 2005, p. 7), which allows for a broad range of students to participate. Ulbricht also noted that CBAE programs can be designed:

Specifically for local citizens and special groups including at-risk youth, homeless individual, older adults, handicapped people, gifted and talented individuals, the incarcerated, and others not always included in K-12 art classrooms. Such programs take place in schools, park facilities, art centers, art museums, retirement centers, and store-front galleries, in addition to local, state, and federal prisons. (p. 8).

This inclusive environment welcomes all people and facilitates education outside of the K-12 classroom.

The connection to community can create a sense of “rootedness” for participants, allowing those involved to feel more connected to the place, people of the community, customs, culture and traditions which exist while also providing the “opportunity to belong to the group” (Congdon, 2004; Green & Kindseth, 2001, p. 339; Ulbricht, 2005). CBAE offers art educators a way in which to "build bridges between their program and the community" (Adejumo, 2000, p. 12). Additionally, Bain & Mesa-Bains (2002) suggested that "art programs help to keep students in school, especially when there is a community initiative" (p. 187).

CBAE is a method of bringing the traditions, cultures and values of students' families and the greater community into the art classroom, thereby integrating the school, families and community. In this way, "art educators have developed art curriculum around local traditions and daily life experiences as a way to broaden what can be seen as aesthetic, while celebrating a sense of place and connections to the local culture and environment" (Congdon, 2004, p. 6).

CBAE strengthens residents' awareness of the community to understand the culture, traditions, unique characteristics and commonalities that define their individual community. (Lawton, 2019). This awareness has the power to facilitate social change and "foster social consciousness" (Lawton, 2019, p. 216). Villeneuve & Sheppard found that "by studying art and the community, students open themselves up to a meaningful new world close to home" (2009, p. 12). By focusing on the community in which students

live, CBAE can allow those students to have a more informed, involved experience within their own local environment. Sometimes it takes looking inward, close to home, to see and appreciate everything which one may take for granted had it not been given special attention. Additionally, CBAE benefits the economy of the community as it can promote gainful employment to artists and the buying and selling of art (Greschel, 2019; Newman et al., 2003).

Empowerment, identity and ownership

CBAE encourages its participants to enact social activism with the purpose of enhancing the community it is serving. Lawton (2019) described it as the “area within art education in which creative community engagement, service-learning, and social practice art intersect” (p. 206). A feeling of empowerment and ownership may promote feelings of leadership for youth and adolescents as they take part in activities that better their local communities (Grauer, Castro, Lin, 2012; Green & Kindseth, 2001; Pedraza, 2010; Ulbricht, 2005; Villeneuve & Sheppard, 2009).

One of the reasons CBAE programs create a sense of ownership and empowerment for those involved is because the participants actively decide, where, and what the art in their community will focus on; allowing those involved to make active contributions to "beautifying the local community" (Pedraza, 2010, p. 13).

Adejumo (2000) noted, "sustaining the material culture of a community provides its members with a source of pride. A feeling of unity arises from shared activities that reflect a sense of common purpose" (p. 12). He continued, "awareness of [the] relationship to community would heighten their sense of personal responsibility and

generate positive disposition" (Adejumo, 2000, p. 13). Responsibility for one's community is a positive outcome which can result from CBAE programs. When students feel the community is a part of their identity, they feel empowered to protect and enhance it especially in economically disadvantaged areas (Cunha Bastos, 1999). Often in economically disadvantaged areas there is a lack of infrastructure or funding for CBAE programs; however, Bains & Mesa-Bains (2002) found that often youth from these areas desire a program which can promote their community and showcase their art talent. Congdon noted that community-based art projects create an environment in which the "connective and... underlying aesthetic value system become more valuable" (2004, p. 14). These programs help us to "recognize the best of who we are while we understand that no community is perfect" (Congdon, 2004, p. 44).

CBAE programs are beneficial to communities because they "have the potential to empower participants when the outreach is designed to merge with the unique needs and resources of the community where the work is situated (Eckhoff, 2011, p. 258). CBAE art programs enable individuals to express the freedom and availability to "shift, reshape, and transform" (Grauer, Castro, & Lin, 2012, p. 142).

CBAE as a trend

Research has shown that CBAE was an increasingly popular trend in contemporary art education between the early 2000s and the mid 2010s (Congdon, 2004; Epstein, 2011; Grauer, Castro, & Lin, 2012). Congdon noted that "community-based art is increasingly being created and recognized in the academic art world and in the field of the art educator" (2004, p. 3). Congdon (2004) found that "teaching children and youth to

care about their neighborhoods is a goal that is becoming increasingly important" (p. 45). Some states were even "beginning to include school, family and community connections in their qualifications for the certification of teachers, administrators, counselors, and other educators (Epstein, 2011). The majority of material found about CBAE as an increasing trend seems to drop-off after about 2013. Perhaps community-based art education was placed on a back burner to create room for other topics in art education such as choice-based art education or Teaching for Artistic Behavior (TAB).

MINDPOP and CLI

MINDPOP, defined as "a consultancy that designs and implements creative services nationwide" was created in 2010 as an agency determined to bring art to every student in Austin (MINDPOP, 2021). In 2016, MINDPOP partnered with the city of Austin and AISD to create the Creative Learning Initiative (CLI) in order to give broader access to creative learning and the arts to students in Austin. Through city, community, and district supports CLI goals are to, "(a) increase students' access to sequential fine arts instruction, (b) foster classroom learning with Creative Teaching across the curriculum, and (c) increase networks of arts programming during and out of the school day" (MINDPOP, 2021). From initial implementation, the program ran for three years before the organization gathered and analyzed data for results.

After the 2016-2017 school year, MINDPOP (2021) found that middle school students who attended a CLI school produced better academic outcomes than students from years past and secondary school students involved in the fine arts had greater attendance than those who had not attended a CLI campus and students scored higher

emotional skill evaluations. This data suggests that students who participate in art and creative learning attend school more frequently and achieve higher academic success than those who are not as exposed to the arts and creative learning opportunities.

Kealing Middle School is not a participating CLI school at this time, however AISD has plans to involve more schools in the future. Their 10-year plan includes the implementation of training to 1,500 of certified AISD educators located at 36 of their schools. AISD's goal is to have 6,000 teachers implementing CLI practices for 81,000 students by the 2023-2024 school year and are currently "thriving and meeting all benchmarks towards [meeting these goals]" (AISD, 2020; MINDPOP, 2021).

SENSE OF PLACE

Gradle (2007) described a sense of place as “a chance to be part of both built and natural communities” (p. 403). From that sense of belonging comes a rootedness which breeds empowerment, ownership, and clarity of identity by “[creating] connections with important ideas about how place shapes our identity” (Neves & Graham, 2018).

Generally, those who feel a sense of place also feel a strong connection to their community, whether that exists within a group, a mental state, or a physical location (Gradle, 2007; Neves & Graham, 2018; Villeneuve & Sheppard, 2009). Sense of place is more than just a location or a landscape, it is enjoying the feeling of belonging to that environment and community which exists in a location, embodying the spirit of the place (Gradle, 2007).

Paying attention to the unique characteristics and history of a place lends itself to the opportunity to teach local art history and delve into knowledge of the community (Neves & Graham, 2018; Villeneuve & Shepard, 2009). Connections between students and the community have the opportunity to form when art education focuses on an environment as “place-based educators recognize the importance of local traditions, communities, and ecosystem” (Neves & Graham, 2018, p.37).

Fostering a sense of place is important because technology has changed the way in which we spend time together, creating more distance even within small communities (Pipher, 2003). Pipher (2003) listed a handful of things that may have created this change, such as gathering our information from the television rather than neighbors, eating meals apart or distracted by television and/or cell phones, and air-conditioning. These activities encourage us to stay indoors instead of outdoors, or on porches where many used to sit and converse, which has provided a presence which watched over the neighborhood. Instead of technology making us a global village, Pipher (2003) described it as making us a global strip mall, removing all the individual characteristics of a place and replacing those with corporate counterparts. Gradle (2007) referred to this culture as "boxed-to-go", one in which the environment is fast-paced, lacking the time and attention necessary for community connection.

Gradle described the lack of sense of place as a loss of belonging or attachment, which could be caused by a variety factors, such as "transnational migration, of increased [or decreased] economic and social mobility, and of the pervasive characteristics of a

homogenous consumer-scape" (2007, p. 392). These factors often leave us with a sense of "the other". This can make individuals feel apart, different, and foreign.

A way to change the lack of sense of place is to learn and hold local knowledge near and dear to the heart. "Local knowledge...comes down to an intimate understanding of what is generally true in the locally obvious; it concerns what is true about place in general" (Casey, 1996, p.45). Adejumo stated that, "youth in our society need to feel a sense of connection with the world around them. Interaction may be generated through community-based activities in art" (2000, p. 13). Pipher noted that "a strong community will include people of different ages, ethnic backgrounds, socioeconomic status, and interests" (2003, p. 138).

CBAE establishes a connection between art and sense of place because it has the ability to "celebrat[e] a sense of place and connection to the local culture and environment" (Congdon, 2004, p.6). The connection between the people and the shared environment is the essence of place, uniting nature with the people and culture (Gradle, 2007). CBAE has the ability to highlight history and traditions, the bedrock of community, providing a clearer understanding of the place (Villeneuve & Sheppard, 2009).

Identity, empowerment, ownership, accountability

Those who feel a strong sense of place often feel their identity is connected in part to that place, therefore they feel empowered to be a part of that place and there is a sense of ownership and accountability to care for and maintain that place, the people and community (Casey, 1996; Gradle, 2007; Neves & Graham, 2018). Additionally, creating

art about a certain place or places could help us to understand our view of ourselves and our connections to that place (Neves & Graham, 2018).

Demonstrating understanding of the community, its culture, history, art and heritage can enable students to see their own cultural identity and understand their potential within society, especially when the community is economically disadvantaged (Cunha Bastos, 2002). Congdon (2004) noted,

Students involved in community-based art programming are encouraged to interact positively with the environment and expand on the aesthetic dimensions in their lives...Each goal is intended to assist us to work better to understand our natural and built environment as we interact with it, represent it, and work to change it for the better. (p. 48)

Neves & Graham (2018) share the sentiment, they stated "connections to place can be an important influence on our sense of self" (p. 37). Therefore, knowledge of one's community can make an impact on one's identity and enhance self-esteem. Villeneuve & Sheppard (2009) found that when students learned and completed projects based on their community, they demonstrated a sense of ownership and were proud to share their knowledge of the community.

Social responsibility is an important factor in facilitating the enjoyment of a sense of place. Casey noted, "to be cultural, to have a culture, is to inhabit a place sufficiently intensely to cultivate it – to be responsible for it, to respond to it, to attend to it caringly" (1996, p. 34). Pipher echoed these sentiments by saying, "communities are about accountability, about what we can and should do for each other...connections have a way of keeping us accountable" (2003, p. 136).

Sense of belonging, "rootedness"

Casey (1996) defined sense of place as "the place where we "belong"" (p. 92) and claimed that we are not "*in* places but *of* them" (p. 19). Although a sense of place is about more than just belonging to a place, it is also about caring and being cared for by the that place, "where we gladly forego the luxuries of life for friendship, companionship, and the wellbeing of others" (Casey, 1996, p.92). Encouraging these developments in youth increases a sense of belongingness in their community from an early age into adulthood (Pedraza, 2010).

A sense of place becomes more than a landscape or location, it is the connection of the body, mind, community and location (Casey, 1996; Gradle, 2007). Place and a sense of place must be experienced to be known (Casey, 1996). Casey stated, "there is no knowing or sensing a place except by being in that place, and to be in that place is to be in a position to perceive it" (1996, p. 18).

Place can hold meaning and lifelong memories for the members of various communities. A place is more than just a physical location, it reflects "interactions with human and non-human life in physical environments, memories, and the actions of people everywhere" (Gradle, 2007, p. 396). Places are never stationary, but are always changing, encouraging new memories, behaviors, and relationships to take place, giving that place its own power (Casey, 1996). "Places gather...things...[and] also gather experiences and histories, even languages and thoughts" (Casey, 1996, p. 24).

Opportunity to teach about local (art) history, local cultures, and traditions

CBAE provides educators with the opportunity to create a strong sense of place within their classrooms. By creating units which focus on their community, teachers can encourage a sense of place for their students (Ulbricht, 2005; Villeneuve & Sheppard, 2009). "Place-based educators recognize the importance of local traditions, communities and ecosystems" (Neves & Graham, 2018).

One example of developing an entire unit to focus on community can be found in Villeneuve & Sheppard's (2009) account of Frenchtown. Frenchtown is a predominantly African American, economically disadvantaged neighborhood in Tallahassee. Many former slaves settled and flourished there after the Civil War until the 1950s. By the 1990s, Frenchtown had a high rate of crime and poverty and was the focus of city revitalization efforts. In 2009, one educator developed a unit intended to change the way students thought about their neighborhood.

Mr. Sheppard began the unit by instructing the class to create a collage of how they viewed Frenchtown. Many of the collages featured negative images of poverty, violence and racial injustice. Through a series of lessons, the students learned about the history of the neighborhood, visited a local museum and business owner, and heard from a Community Development coordinator about future plans for revitalization. By showcasing the unique qualities of their own community, students became more knowledgeable and felt a stronger sense of ownership for where they lived, allowing the students to "open themselves to a meaningful new world close to home" (Villeneuve & Sheppard, 2009, p. 12). At the conclusion of the unit, there was a noticeable shift in the

thinking of the students regarding their thoughts about Frenchtown. They began to display proud ownership of the past, present and future of their home.

Sense of place explored through art

There are different ways in which students may creatively express themselves and their sense of place through art, including: performance art, media-based artwork, learning about their community and creating art with this knowledge, painting or drawing images of a place they feel they belong, or creating murals about their community (Gradle, 2007; Grauer et al., 2012; Pedraza, 2010; Neves & Graham, 2018; Villeneuve & Sheppard, 2009) According to Cunha Bastos (2002), "studying art from students own cultures, community-based art education can enhance students' abilities to understand and critically analyze their culture through the study of art". Creating art about the local community can empower students and teachers alike to revitalize their own cultural identity and where they fit in within their own community (Cunha Bastos, 2002, p.73). Educational opportunities focusing on community promote a sense of place for students. Congdon (2004) noted these activities are "more meaningful to students and community members" (p. 41).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Epstein (2011) defined community engagement as an often student-centered "partnership [of] educators, families, and community members [who] work together to share information, guide students, solve problems, and celebrate successes" (p. 4). According to the National Endowment for the Arts (n.d), "community arts engagement is

a variety of programming, performance, and event activities that leverage art to engage community members in cultural, social, and economic development”. An important aspect of community engagement for educators to remember is that community engagement “takes time, patience, and consistency” (Lawton, 2019, p. 215)

Due to the nature of community engagement, there are many revolving parts to organize and connect to accomplish a successful experience. Therefore, community engagement often takes time, patience and consistency (Gradle, 2007; Lawton 2019). In general, collaboration takes more time because decisions are made collectively rather than individually. The organization of people, ideas and supplies need care and attention to convene. Consistency is important to ensure that goals are accomplished and followed through to completion.

Just as communities change over time, community engagement changes with time and tradition as well (Congdon, 2004). "Communities are formed in various ways around diverse belief structures, identities, and spaces. Healthy communities are constantly changing and adapting to new ideas and way of thinking. They also adhere to traditional aspects that have been rethought and recreated" (Congdon, 2004, p. 18). In this way, community engagement takes the pulse of the community at the moment in which it is happening. Those thoughts, ideas and traditions could change over time. Even though some aspects of the community may change, other aspects will remain the same, creating a connection through a shared sense of beliefs, responsibility, and purpose (Congdon, 2004).

Community engagement encourages all ages, races, and economic statuses of society to participate, providing equal opportunity for anyone to be involved, making it democratic in nature. Dewey's view of a democratic society was one in which all people would be able to have equal access to education and employment possibilities. In an ideal society all people would be treated equally regardless of their religion, ethnicity, race, gender or nationality. In this way individuals could be transformed and therefore transform society (Dewey, 1916).

COMMUNITY ART

Lawton (2019) explained that “community art is a form of community engagement that embodies aspects of social practice art and community-based art education . . . [it] is participatory and collaborative” (p. 205). Community art production can have a powerful effect and has been described as a “transformative, courageous, and a sustainable” form of art (Bains & Mesa-Bains, 2002; Woywood & Deal, 2016). The collaborative nature of creating community art results in a finished product born from the efforts of many and not just one, leaving inspirational art images to be admired by the public (Lawton, 2019; Ulbricht, 2005). Additionally, community art has the tendency to engage and embellish the community, giving others a beautiful place to spend time (Pedraza, 2010).

Murals and street art as a medium have been an increasing trend for artists and businesses within communities (Luckerson, 2018). When students are able to create a mural reflecting their community, they are granted the opportunity to use their voice. The content of a mural can be vast or community specific; it has the freedom to express what

the artist(s) desire. Bains & Mesa-Bains (2002) stated "the obvious reason we should learn about other cultures include that learning another way of seeing the world expands our own, giving us more choices of what to enjoy and who we might want to become. This helps us better to understand our neighbors" (p. 37). When artists create public works, they often are concerned with how it will fit within the community, considering not only location but content (Ulbricht, 2005). Overall, community art can impart a story, show history, promote culture or display the desire for a more just society.

Chapter 3: Methodology

CASE STUDY

The research methodology, or body of methods and rules employed by a discipline (Merriam-Webster, n.d.), used in this case study included interviews of members of Big Medium, an art educator who taught at Kealing Middle, and an eighth-grade art student enrolled at Kealing Middle during the 2020-2021 school year. These interviews were coded, analyzed and interpreted to form the research findings. Due to the descriptive, explanatory, and qualitative nature of the study, a case study was identified as the preferred research method. Additionally, an aspect of auto-ethnography was included to add content to the field of data collected.

Case studies enable the researcher to use multiple methods, such as interviews and observations, for an in-depth examination of subjects in their natural environment, are flexible in terms of research questions asked, and typically study a person, event or program (Person et al., 2015). Consequently, conducting a case study appeared to be most fitting when conducting research based on the East Austin Studio Tour and the benefits experienced by art educators and students when they participate as a school program in the Studio Tour. Initially, the data intended to be collected included interviews, observations prior to and during EAST, field notes, and photographs collected during the event. However, due to the unforeseen circumstances brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, only interviews conducted via video conference were able to be collected. For this reason, I included reflections from previous years of personal experience as an official artist and visitor during EAST.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Pragmatism is the theoretical framework used to conduct this case study. Pragmatism postulates that education should be about life and growth. It involves practical and experiential learning and focuses on the real-world application of lessons. Community engagement is an aspect of student participation in EAST. Students' participation in EAST has the potential to influence their community engagement throughout their school years and into their adult life. Pragmatism aligns with Dewey's philosophy that in order to enrich the student learning experience, education must be connected to the larger community (Dewey, 1938).

PREPARATIONS FOR THE STUDY

At the beginning of this study, I was faced with many challenges and limitations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic which began to have major effects in the United States in March 2020. More information about how those challenges and limitations impacted this study can be found in Chapter 5.

PARTICIPANTS

Big Medium

This case study began through email communication with the program director at Big Medium, Jordan Gentry. Gentry expressed interest in participating in the study and indicated Big Medium's additional interest in encouraging a wider school participation in EAST. Gentry identified a few schools that had participated in EAST in previous years, including Kealing Middle School and Blanton Elementary. Gentry also recommended

that I should set-up an interview with Shea Little, the executive director of Big Medium and co-founder of EAST.

Upon receiving IRB approval to conduct this study a few months later, I discovered that there had been staff changes at Big Medium, including a new program coordinator. I was able to set up an interview with Shea Little, but not with the new program coordinator.

Schools

Kealing Middle School is a public school that has participated in EAST for the past six years. It is located within the EAST boundaries, which made it a suitable candidate for the study. I was able to schedule an interview with the art educator at Kealing Middle School. In 2020, no school participated in EAST.

Student

An art educator provided information about this case study to a student who attended Kealing Middle School during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years. The student and their parent/guardian were contacted for an interview with the student. Both parties consented to take part in an interview for this study.

METHODS

Interviews

Interviews were the primary data collected for this case study. All interviews were conducted in a semi open-ended and informal format. Due to COVID-19 protocols, all interviews were conducted via video conference in order to maintain social distancing

protocol which was in effect within the city of Austin. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim in order to achieve an in-depth perspective. While technology is a valuable reality that has been especially realized due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person interviews may have revealed additional information or altered results. Prior to the virtual interviews, all participants were contacted by email and asked for their willing participation. Upon acceptance, all participants received and signed consent forms.

INTERVIEW CODING

Qualitative research methods were used in gathering information for this study. Qualitative research involves interviews, it is experiential and can be used to conduct research in different disciplines (DeLyser et al., 2013). In this research, coding was used to interpret data gathered from interviews.

Coding is used to interpret qualitative data and it entails analysis of keywords and themes contained in interviews, field notes, and observations (DeLyser et al. 2013). It is a tedious and time-intensive undertaking but allows the researcher a more intimate understanding of data and can lead to revelations in data results (DeLyer et al., 2013). Coding is especially useful when community is the topic of research (Hailemariam et al. 2020). Hailemariam et al. (2020) claimed, "individuals from the community have a unique experience and understanding of the circumstances surrounding themselves and their community" (p. 208). Coding interviews that are focused on community enables inclusion of individual perceptions and perspectives in data analysis.

In coding collected data, interview transcriptions were read multiple times and analyzed with points of interest sorted into common themes. The contents of each of the

three interviews conducted were different. However, all interviews had common themes.

The following chapter will explain how the coded data was interpreted as research findings.

Chapter 4: Data and Discussion

DATA AND ANALYSIS

Historical Analysis

Before the analysis of the data collected during this case study, the history of East Austin needs to be noted and validated. Without the relocation of non-whites in Austin to East Austin, EAST may not exist in the way it does currently. The history of East Austin is what made it cheap and vibrant at the time the founders of EAST moved to East Austin. The land and industrial manufacturing infrastructure located in East Austin made it unattractive and less valuable as far back as the 1920s, hence the Austin City Council moved the "undesirable" people there as well. Because African Americans and Hispanic communities alike built their own communities in East Austin, the area was not frequented by whites until the last few decades. Years of insufficiently public-school and community funding resulted in outdated educational facilities, parks and recreational areas throughout East Austin and subsequently newcomers to Austin avoided moving there. As a result, these shortcomings made the housing in East Austin much cheaper.

Due to the affordability and proximity to downtown, many artists and young people began to move themselves and/or their art studios to East Austin. Located within the historically African American and Hispanic communities were many interesting businesses, murals and vibrant culture which was attractive for young people and especially for artists. With these elements combined, East Austin began attracting artistic types to live and explore its' offerings. Events such as EAST and the rise of new and revived eateries, music venues, and bars have made East Austin an attractive area for young and affluent Austinites to frequent, ushering in the gentrification which East Austin is experiencing

today. As East Austin continues to grow and change into a hip and trendy locale, those who have lived there for generations are being displaced yet again.

Undoubtedly, the displacement of entire races towards an undesirable location is a deplorable part of the history of Austin, however, without that history East Austin would not be what it is today. Therefore, it is important to recognize and respect the history, people and framework which was built out of segregation in order to appreciate the community and appeal of East Austin at present.

East Experience

The first step in EAST participation is the completion of an application. The application requires three to five images of artwork from the individual or the group who intends to participate. As mentioned earlier, groups are allowed to apply together when they share a space. Applications include the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant details of the facility where the art will be shown. The application fee is due at the time of application. Applications are accepted from the middle of July to the middle of August. The annual show takes place during the middle two weekends of November, so this time frame gives Big Medium ample time to select artists, add their information to the website registry and input the information into that year's catalog. Artists who participate are expected to have their studio space open from 10 am to 6 pm on Saturday and Sunday for both weekends.

Once selected, the artist receives an email confirming their acceptance for the year's show. The email also contains directions about Due EAST, the opening event for EAST. About a week before the tour begins, artists drop their work off with Big Medium. When they drop off their work, the artists also receive their tour stop number sign. These

signs are to be placed in the yard in front of the studio, in a window, or on the exterior of the studio building. The signs allow visitors to know which tour stop they are at and mark the official studio stops for passers-by. Artists are given a catalog for the year's event which lists all of the participating artists, exhibitions, and business partners.

Due EAST typically takes place the Friday before EAST is open to the public. Due EAST in recent years offered a dinner for Big Medium members and for those who purchased tickets. The dinners featured food from local chefs and drinks provided by local breweries, wineries, and distilleries. Each person who attended the dinner received a swag bag filled with local trinkets and the new EAST catalog. At the conclusion of the dinner, the art show commenced. Every participating artist is given two tickets for the art show. The public may also purchase tickets to attend the event.

The art for Due EAST is required to fit inside a 12"x 12" x 12" space. The purpose of the art on display at Due EAST is to give the audience a quick preview of the show. All the work on display is labeled with the artist's name, their tour stop number, and price if the work is for sale. A visit to Due EAST can dictate which studios are visited by guests based on their impression of the art, so showcasing the artist's style is important. Catalogs may also be purchased at Due EAST for \$35. The profits from the art sold at Due EAST are split between Big Medium and the artist, however artists have the option to donate their portion of the sale to Big Medium in order to give back to the local organization. The Due EAST building location changes every year, and it is open for both weekends of EAST during tour hours to the general public. Artwork that is not sold

during the show is returned to the artist who can pick it up about a week after the show closes. If the work was sold, the new owner comes to pick up their new piece of art.

For two weekends every November, East Austin artists welcome members of the community and tourists alike into their homes and studios for an intimate look at their artwork. EAST was created with community building and artist networking as the primary goal, but Big Medium does realize that sales occur throughout the show (Little, personal communication, December 7, 2020). Artists on the tour are not the only ones who may experience a financial gain during the event, as local businesses often have higher volume of visitors and sales during this time. While the monetary gain is a plus, the comradery which is experienced within the East Austin boundaries is more beneficial.

EAST allows the unique opportunity for Austin locals and tourists to visit neighborhoods which they have may have not yet discovered. EAST visitation has grown significantly since its start in 2003. Big Medium reports that in 2018, 50,000 visitors attended EAST throughout the two weekends (Big Medium, 2021). Neighbors are invited in for conversation, drinks and snacks, and to view the results of the creative energy of local artists. Knowing ones' neighbors creates a feeling of safety and community, vital in today's world (Pipher, 2002). Students from local school have been given the task of exploring the Studio Tour as an assignment in the past (Little, personal communication, December 7, 2020). The experience has provided those students the opportunity to see new parts of the city, talk with artists, and have a first-hand experience of an art career option should they pursue art.

Big Medium encourages as many artists as possible to participate on the tour. As mentioned previously, Big Medium strives to be inclusive to all artists in the city. They work with Capital View Arts who promotes artists of color. Artists selected through Capital View Arts have their application fee waived. All artists have the option to petition the application fee of \$175, but in 2020 many fees were waived in order to remove the financial barrier from participation in the show. Additionally, Big Medium has strived to retain local artists in the Austin area. They would also like to see young and budding artists from local colleges and universities remain in Austin as practicing artists. EAST strives for Austin to be known as a place where you can make a living as an artist, and that those just starting out in their art careers can find support and community within Austin. By fostering a strong artist community, Big Medium promotes a healthy environment for artists to sustain a career.

There is no age limit for participation in the Studio Tour. Little noted that the youngest artist that participated in the tour was seven years old (personal communication, December 7, 2020). The child loved making art and his parents were happy to pay the application fee and use their home as a studio space. Little said that he has loved seeing youth participate in the tour because it provides the youth with an opportunity to build their self-esteem, work hard towards a goal, and have first-hand experience combining creative practice with business sensibility (personal communication, December 7, 2020).

Personal Experience

While this research is a case study, the following data aligns with auto-ethnography and contributed to findings to replace the lack of data collected due to the

challenges on the COVID-19 pandemic. Merriam-Webster defines ethnography as "the study and systematic recording of human cultures; a descriptive work produced from such research" (n.d.). I reflected on my own experience of being a visitor and an official artist in the East Austin Studio Tour when analyzing the data found within the case study.

The first year I attended EAST was in 2014, about six months after I moved to Austin. The day started out with brunch at a local restaurant in East Austin. Since I was a first-time visitor, I was not aware of Due EAST. Fortunately, I had a catalog for that year's show which included a map that notated each studio's location. I found an area which was heavily populated with participating studios and visited each one. Since East Austin is heavily populated with creative spaces, it was easy to walk from one studio to the next for miles. Studio spaces which I visited included businesses, homes, garages, and warehouse spaces. During the tour, I met and spoke to many artists about their work. As a practicing artist, the experience was inspiring and exciting.

In 2017 and 2018, I was an official EAST artist. While I did not have a studio space in East Austin, I knew a group called the Backpack Co-lab who invited me to show my artwork in their space. They were an improvisational performance group who rented out artist studios in their renovated warehouse space. The Backpack Co-Lab had been an official EAST location in years prior, and they were able to give me tips about the experience of being an official artist.

As an official artist, I stayed in the studio with my art for the duration of the show. There were five other spaces in that same courtyard as my studio space, which I took time to visit at slow periods. I experienced slow mornings with few visitors, but the

number of visitors often accelerated during the afternoons. Some visitors would take a quick look at the artwork and then head to the next location and others would ask me about the work or begin conversations. During those two years, I sold a fair amount of work and made many connections with visitors and other artists. As an official artist, I was unable to visit other studios, but was able to attend events which took place after tour hours.

EAST IN 2020

EAST in 2020 looked much different than in years past due to the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing practices. Once the pandemic hit in March 2020, Big Medium realized that the WEST studio tour, which occurs in the spring, would need to be cancelled. By mid-summer Big Medium understood that the pandemic would still be problematic and full of risk in the fall and the decision was made to conduct both the West Austin and East Austin Studio Tours virtually. Thus, it was renamed the Austin Studio Tours. In an attempt to relieve indoor risks and promote outdoor activity, the Studio Tours in 2020 included outdoor installations, temporary outdoor exhibitions, and murals throughout town. Little stated, "We were watching the scientists talk about the second wave hitting in the fall, which it did, we just didn't want to be a part of that massive city-wide spreading of it" (Little, personal communication, December 7, 2020). Big Medium made the decision to exclude outdoor art markets from the tour as they did not want to be responsible for an increase in coronavirus cases that scientists predicted would happen in the fall. Instead, most of the Studio Tour was available online.

Big Medium found that the Studio Tour was much different this year. Little stated that, "it felt like a placeholder, like we were saying, 'Remember, this used to take place?', but what is happening is not even close to the same" (Little, personal communication, December 7, 2020). Both EAST and WEST are highly social events, and the socialization of these events will not and cannot be the same until it is safe for people to gather within artist studios again. Therefore, the conversations with artists within the intimate setting of their studios must be halted for the time being. Currently, the plan for 2021 is to have another combined event. This will include artists from the EAST and WEST tours to partake in one large city tour in the fall of 2021.

Schools

Students may experience EAST as a visitor, to complete a school assignment, or as a participant whether as an individual artist or with a school show. There have been numerous schools in the Austin area who have participated in the event in past years. Kealing Middle School in East Austin is one school that has participated for multiple years. Little has often found that when schools participate in EAST it is because the art teacher at that school has experience as an artist or with EAST personally (personal communication, December 7, 2020). That is the case with the art educator at Kealing Middle School.

This art teacher, called "Ms. X", is a practicing artist and had experience showing work in art galleries prior to becoming an art educator. Ms. X was an artist from the time she could draw, and her passion for art runs deeply into her personal life. She understood

the feelings of pride in her work and accomplishments that arose upon having an art show. During her past art shows friends, family, and members of the community were able to come and see her artwork. She recalled the anticipation of working hard to accomplish the works for the show, getting ready for the show, and then dressing up to talk with friends and family about the work. She called the feeling "absolutely rewarding...exhilarating" (X, personal communication, October 3, 2020). Those memories were the primary motivation to arrange Kealing Middle School art students to participate in EAST. While there is extra work to complete the application and selection process, organization and facilitation of the show, Ms. X found that it was worthwhile for the students.

From 2015 to 2019, Kealing Middle School participated in the East Austin Studio Tour. All art educators go through the same application process as artists on the tour, although schools can participate for free. When selecting work for the show in the past, Ms. X designated about half of her student's work to be shown and gave special consideration to 8th grade students because it was their last year at Kealing. The selection process depended heavily on the composition of the artworks. Fall projects were the ones featured in the past and consisted of Day of the Dead clay skulls and Zentangles.

Each fall, Ms. X has taken students to the Mexicarte Museum located in downtown Austin. The students were able to see the exhibits on show at the museum and buy trinkets from the gift store. The students use inspiration from the field trip to create their own version of Day of the Dead (or Días de los Muertos) skulls to celebrate the Mexican holiday, which occurs annually from October 31st to November 2nd to honor

loved ones who have passed on (Brandes, 1998). Day of the Dead is beloved holiday in Mexican American culture and reflects the cultural heritage of the 34.8% Hispanic population of Kealing Middle School and the history of East Austin's Hispanic population. Additionally, Ms. X is of Hispanic descent and this project is one of her personal favorites to teach. Zentangles are drawings which the students create, Zen represents an element of meditation and tangles stands for patterns. Zentangles have been popular in art classes because they bring in an element of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) into the art classroom. These projects have been showcased in the past but are not the only art created for the EAST showcase.

There are extra projects which have been created in the past specifically for EAST, including a Mona Lisa face cut-out which can be used for photographs, interactive drawing displays created by the students and interactive for visitors, and a face-painting booth facilitated by student volunteers. About 70% of the students whose work is in the show have been directly involved with the tour and exhibit excitement from this involvement.

In the fall, Ms. X described EAST to the students and showed them the online EAST catalog during class. The top student work was submitted to Big Medium where the organizers chose the artwork which represented the school in the catalog. While there was no physical reward, there was some competition between students for this recognition.

The day of the show, Ms. X arrived early to finish any last-minute touches before guests entered the building to view the student art. The Studio Tour ran from 10am to 6

pm for two weekends (Saturday and Sunday). The art was set up in a gallery fashion, with art and labels pinned to moveable walls in the school's first floor common area. Student helpers showed up and took their places, while other students came throughout the weekend with their friends or family members. Students are not required to help during the Studio Tour hour or to visit the open house, but many past students attended the event. The students that came were proud of their work and happy to talk about it with their guests. In these conversations, students remarked on what they studied, such as line and value, and how they applied those ideas within the artwork. In past years, some students have met up with their peers and toured the art studios in the vicinity of the school.

Students who have participated in the past have often used the experience on their resume when they applied to magnet high schools in the Austin area. The students tended to be excited when they realized that they could add an additional qualification on their resume for the applications (X, personal communication, October 3, 2020).

Students

The student participant, "Student A", attended Kealing Middle School from sixth to eighth grade. Student A had a passion for creating art in and out of school and was enrolled in advanced art classes during their 8th grade year at Kealing. Student A remembered past visits to artist studios every year during EAST as a special yearly outing with family. Even though she had feelings of vulnerability surrounding the idea of a large audience looking at her art, she wanted to a wider audience look at and share opinions of her work to allow for growth.

Student A had not had artwork shown in previous year's during EAST because she took electives classes outside of the art room. In 2020, she was placed in advanced art class. The advanced art class typically requires art prerequisites, but she was placed in the class due to her art talent. She had the desire to have her work shown during the EAST showcase, and likely would have if Kealing had participated in 2020, because she was an eighth-grade student and had a strong art practice in and out of school. At the time of the interview, Student A was interested in showing her art to "outsiders" and was considering making a public Instagram for her art in order to gain perspective from people other than her family.

Connections to CBAE

The partnership of public-schools with the East Austin Studio Tour is a unique form of CBAE. CBAE is defined as a multifaceted form of art education which generally promotes purposeful engagement to or with a community and this definition provides a wide umbrella for many different kinds of experiences. This partnership is an example of one between a public-school art programs and its' students and a larger community-wide art showcase.

Interactive exhibits have occurred during EAST, but production of art during EAST is not typically the focus during the Studio Tour. Rather, the focus is on post-production in terms of displaying, experiencing, and talking about art which has been produced. EAST encourages artists to continue the practice and production of art by creating an inclusive showcase in the East Austin area focused on local artists, their work, and the art community. The establishment of a creative practice takes discipline, time,

and effort (Gradle, 2007; Lawton, 2019). These are all valuable skills which can be translated to other areas of life outside of the creation of art. By partnering with schools, EAST sets an example for students that hard work and determination pay off with rewards in confidence, recognition, public-speaking, and business sensibility – all skills which can be applied in adult life.

Sense of Place and Community Engagement

The purposes of this study were to examine if the partnership between a community art program and a public school could create a sense of place and a greater sense of community for the students and teachers who participate in them. A sense of place is defined as a strengthened feeling of belonging to the community and place where one resides. All three participants, the executive director, art teacher, and student, were asked in their interview about sense of place and community experienced during EAST. The data collected through those interviews suggested there were benefits for participation in EAST. The benefits included a heightened sense of place, connection to community, and willingness to participate in community initiatives.

Shea Little noted that sense of place occurs during EAST by providing community connection between artists and those who view their work (personal communication, December 7, 2020). Members of the community, including students, parents, and educators are encouraged to visit the homes and studios of local artist who reside in East Austin. These meetings foster a sense of belonging for artists and a sense of knowing ones' neighbors for all others. Participation in EAST creates a greater sense of belonging to the community.

School participation in EAST provides students to feel a sense of belonging to the greater Austin community. Students have the opportunity to share their artwork with the community, share in their success, and receive feedback, just as all other participating artists do. Student A described the school atmosphere as inclusive, providing a safe place for one "weirdo" to fit in amongst many others. Research suggests that when children feel comfortable and safe in an environment, they are more willing to be vulnerable and share their artwork (Shore, 2013).

Teachers also feel a sense of place providing a venue for their students and their artwork to shine. Ms. X noted that she "get[s] feedback from parent [and] from children... and that's really rewarding...I get to experience their happiness" (personal communication, October 3, 2020). Being able to share in the student's joy is just one aspect of participating in EAST. Due to the inclusive nature of EAST, the entire show exhumes a nature of feeling safe enough to participate, and that safe feelings brings about the feelings of community necessary to experience a sense of place.

Students and artists alike show their work to members of the community during EAST therefore, the participation enters the sphere of community art. Little noted that EAST is community art because the art is able to be accessed, owned, and celebrated by the community (personal communication, December 7, 2020). Community engagement occurs when members of the community participate as visitors to the art studios and school art showcases. These factors are the main contributors for developing a sense of community for those involved, whether as artists or as tourists.

All three participants indicated there were benefits gained from the partnership between public school art programs and community art initiatives. Little believed the community benefited from EAST because the art show created commerce, tourism, community building, networking for artists, and an available path for students looking to pursue a career in art. For students, EAST is an environment in which students can show their artwork and gain recognition from others which boosts their confidence. Because EAST is an inclusive event, it provides the opportunity to work with many different members within the East Austin art community. Participation in EAST adds a valuable experience to student's resumes. The event adds to the creative culture of the city, making Austin an attractive place for budding and veteran artists alike. Community building within the city leads to stronger community for all members, making Austin a comfortable place to live.

For educators, participation in EAST provides benefits for school art programs to stand out. By participating in the community art initiative, parents, administrators, and the community can see the work which is being produced within the school art program. Witnessing a school and a teacher who is involved and goes the extra mile for student benefit could be valuable for parents to feel validation that their child is receiving a quality education from educators who care about their students and their work. It shows the community that students are getting a quality education and will shape them into adults who will contribute to the city.

Students benefit by participating because it shows the value of working hard towards a goal. Some of the benefits mentioned for students was the building of self-

esteem, acknowledgement of their effort and art products, getting feedback from others, and adding their experience to their resume. Participating in EAST allowed students to work on their art practice while also practicing business and entrepreneurial skills, valuable for any career direction students may choose to take. Student A noted that she would be comfortable participating in the show because the school itself was a safe environment. Showing artwork to others can be an intimidating experience, but the after-effects are worth the initial vulnerability (X, personal communication, October 17, 2020). The experience of participating in a community event may encourage those students to participate in additional events in the future and may encourage them to be involved members of the community into adulthood.

The community benefits from the tourism which occurs in East Austin during the annual two weekend event. Local businesses have more traffic often leading to higher sales. Restaurants experience greater volume and higher sales from the amount of people out and about. The city benefits from creative events because it makes Austin attractive for large companies like Samsung, Apple, and Google to move offices and generate business. The individual neighbors which are included offer the opportunity to get to know one's neighbors better, creating better relationships and safer neighborhoods. When community members are active and present in their neighborhoods, networking and community building are possible.

The MINDPOP data demonstrated that fine arts and creative learning in public schools may correlate with better attendance, higher grades within other academic subjects and greater emotional skills. Students who are engaged with their education and

who are given the opportunity to participate may enjoy their schoolwork more. These engaged students will likely go on to become successful adults who can contribute to the good of the community.

While an event like EAST takes a lot of energy and time to organize, it provides marked benefits for those involved. School participation requires effort, time, and organization to create a successful event. But those efforts have the potential to add to the creative class, community building, and economy of any city.

DISCUSSION

While the data collected is not vast, it conclusively indicated that teachers and students experience benefits when Kealing Middle School participated in the East Austin Studio Tour. EAST is specific to East Austin; however, a similar event could be organized in other places. A model of this event would not need to start out at the same volume in which EAST is currently operating, as even EAST started out with only 28 artists. To organize an art showcase which is similar, one would need to know artists who are willing to participate. The environment would not need to be like East Austin although having a neighborhood or area where artists could display their work in a close vicinity would likely be beneficial. The weather in Austin in November is typically sunny and warm; therefore, to encourage a walking or biking encouraged event, the organizers would need to think about what time of year would be best for their location. The event would need a strong team of organized and committed individuals to work out the

logistics, create promotional materials, provide information to visitors, and facilitate the event.

School participation in art and other community events is important for students and educators alike. Educators would be required to work extra to make the school showcase happen, but the results would likely be worth the time and effort. Students would gain acknowledgement from the community and know that age is not a requirement for community involvement. Communities which are hopeful to strengthen their creative culture, build art community and artist networking, and encourage students to participate within their community could look at this model and be inspired. It benefits the city of Austin and the community of East Austin and could provide similar benefits to other communities.

While everyone may not experience a sense of place from involvement with EAST, the participants in this study did. All participants in this study claimed that sense of place was a natural benefit from being involved in EAST. Based on these findings, community events may encourage participants to feel a sense of belonging. Community connection comes from building relationships with others, and events such as EAST provide an experience for those relationships to occur and grow. A sense of place and community naturally developed from the relationships which are built and fostered between participating artists and members of the entire Austin community. A heightened sense of place occurred between students, teachers, and parents due to the involvement of Kealing Middle School in EAST. The feedback received by students from EAST visitors

built a bridge for further community involvement and bonds both of which have the ability to create educational and economic opportunities for students in the future.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

While conducting the research for this case study, a variety of challenges and limitations were experienced. First and foremost were the interruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused the United States and the world to partake in a major transition. This transition greatly affected everyone including public school. On March 13, 2020, all AISD schools were closed, and all school related events were cancelled through April 3 (Cicale, 2020). Spring break was extended and all classes for the remainder of the school year occurred in a virtual environment.

In the fall of 2020, AISD classes were conducted virtually for the first three weeks and each campus made individual decisions regarding when they could reopen for reduced capacity in person classes (Cicale, 2020b). Many campuses operated with a hybrid model, allowing students to return to in-person class or continue learning virtually. Due to these changes, many teachers found themselves feeling overwhelmed due to the learning curve of the new online format. Teachers were forced to create all of their lessons on BLEND, a web-based learning management system. It was a challenge to create lessons which were engaging at home as well as in person. Additionally, teachers were expected to manage their classroom virtually, some managing virtual and in-person students at the same time due to the hybrid model.

EAST was forced to change their model for the 2020 show. Their West Austin area art show, WEST, was cancelled in late March. WEST occurs annually at the end of

May and the boundaries include the area west of I-35. In order to produce a show during 2020, Big Medium made the decision to combine the EAST and WEST boundaries and artists to create a city-wide art show which they named the Austin Studio Tour. Due to the social distancing protocols in place by the city of Austin, this Studio Tour occurred primarily in a virtual environment. Big Medium provided a list of murals and which could be toured individually to encourage visitors to move away from their computer screen and get outdoors, however, outdoor markets which could produce congregations of people were not permitted on the official show. They included a few installations that met outdoor and social distance requirements as well. Little felt that the 2020 Austin Studio Tour was a placeholder, to remind people that EAST normally happens, and will likely happen as it used to in the future. Big Medium plans to organize the 2021 Studio Tour in the same fashion as 2020, combining both boundaries and artist from EAST and WEST to allow time for coronavirus cases to decrease. 2022 may look more like the EAST of past, but at this point, there is no way to know what the future holds.

Methods

Mixed methods were intended to be utilized to conduct this research, including participant observations, field notes and photographs of student work during the EAST showcase. These methods were unable to be included in this study as a result of the pandemic which forced significant modifications to the 2020 EAST showcase. Unfortunately, the participating art educator did not have photographs from previous years to share.

Participation

The overall participation for this case study was affected by the pandemic. The changes at Big Medium prohibited additional interviews to be conducted with the staff, due to the change in workload. An additional Austin art educator who had participated in EAST in the past was unwilling to participate in the study due to the extra workload experienced during the fall of 2020 school year. More student interviews were intended to occur, however, the virtual environment made it challenging to acquire additional student volunteers.

The pandemic brought about heightened levels of stress to many everyday activities. Participating in additional activities seemed more challenging, especially when those activities required more time behind a computer screen. All interviews were conducted via video conference. While technology is a great tool that we rely heavily on, it does not completely replace in person interactions. Perhaps the results of the interviews would have been different or more conclusive if conducted in an in-person environment.

SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Due to the unforeseen circumstances which occurred in 2020, this case study changed in order to be completed on time. Suggestions for additional research were considered by location and differentiated by whether the research was based within or outside of Austin, TX. Future research in Austin could comprise of conducting a case study similar to this one but with additional collected data to provide more data from which to synthesize. Ability to witness the school showcase would provide the opportunity to observe the atmosphere, see the artwork and speak with additional

participants such as students, parents/guardians, and community members. Photographs of the event and the student work would demonstrate the quality of the artwork included. Additional data may strengthen and build upon the results found in this study.

Attending EAST may provide additional insights into the benefits experienced by the parents/guardians of students and community members. Future research may provide the opportunity to interview EAST attendees to gain feedback from members of the community. The study could also focus more heavily on community rather than teachers and students.

Other schools could be the focus of the study, such as elementary schools and high schools which have participated in the past or those who may participate in the future. The focus could also be shifted to college level participation, whether as a school associated event or of a college student's experience as an official EAST artist. Benefits experienced by these different age brackets may vary from those found within this study.

Likewise, further research could be conducted to delve into the history of Kealing Middle School or other historically African American school in East Austin such as Huston Tillotson University, Blackshear Elementary or Anderson High School. The research could explore the history, benefit to the East Austin community, or how specifically Kealing's art program has changed throughout the journey from being a poor and segregated school to being to an esteemed magnet school.

Outside of Austin, research could examine a similar public-school and community art initiative. The focus of the study could be centered on art or how art programs work in conjunction with other academic subjects. Research could be conducted on the benefits

experienced within the art classroom when students make work for or about community events. The benefits experienced in other places may vary from those which occurred in this study.

Additional research may be done between a school, public or private, and their participation in a city festival, such as the festivals discussed previously in this thesis, or community art markets. The environment in these types of events is different than that which occurs during EAST and may produce varying results. Furthermore, place-based research in art education could be further investigated as means to better understand how place impacts and inspires learning.

Finally, research could be conducted on how to organize partnerships between school art programs and artist-driven community initiatives in an effective way. This type of study may provide a blueprint for how other communities may create an event similar to EAST but geared towards the unique characteristics which exist in their community.

While these suggestions are not conclusive, additional research about school and community partnership would be beneficial to the field of art education. CBAE is a trending topic in art education, and it is likely that more studies centered on and branching from this topic will occur in the future.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1: SHEA LITTLE INTERVIEW

Sarah Belle Selinger (SBS): Okay, so first question if you're ready, is, what is EAST?

Shea Little: So, the East Austin Studio Tour is basically a, just a self-guided opportunity for the general public to go out and see art in studio spaces. The tour was really started with the idea of connecting artists together and providing, providing us with platforms to sell our work to an audience that may not know that we existed or there weren't enough opportunities out there in Austin at the time, and there still aren't, but the number of artists in town couldn't possibly show their work in the gallery spaces or the opportunities out there so we decided that the best thing to do would be to bring people to the studio space to where the art is being made. And it also doesn't demystify, but it takes away the layer of the art world, kind of, that art world confusion out of it. The white, cube gallery space, that sort of austere environment where art kind of sits in this weird place, that isn't exactly the warmest place. Also, to go to a gallery and talk to an artist is also really hard because they're often not there, and if they are it's the opening reception that's usually a celebration and not a time to, you know, talk. Talk about creative practice or about process with an artist so the Studio Tour was just an opportunity to connect artists together, to network amongst themselves and for the audience to have a chance to see art, where it's made, how it's made, the process behind it, and to talk to the artist in a really comfortable setting, I mean more or less, yeah. That more or less it.

SBS: And how did you begin the East Austin Studio Tour?

SL: So myself and two other people, Jana Swec and Joseph Phillips, we were artists working together. We moved to our old home at 5305 Bolm Road back in 2002, and we started in just some junky old warehouse. We were, we had like one huge bay in this warehouse that was our studio space, no walls, just kind of an open room that we eventually started collaborating together on each other's work. We were making art together. We were slowly getting to know other artists around us. Looking for opportunities for ourselves to show our work. We were starting to turn our studio space, well we lived in a warehouse, so we turned our living room into a temporary gallery to show our work. And we started to slowly start to build momentum behind us as artists and the Studio Tour was just a simple idea as a way to, you know bring more people to our art space, but to co-market other artists around us so that we could all. And we just gathered up all the people that we knew, word spread a little bit, and the first year in 2003, we had 28 artists who participated. We all chipped in, I think it was \$35, and printed a map to promote the tour. That's about it. It was a pretty simple like, "We're going to co-market each other, we are going to throw a little money into this pool, create printed materials and all promote the tour together".

SBS: And that's, what year did that start?

SL: That was in 2003.

SBS: 2003. Um, so what were your original boundaries for the show and then what are they today?

SL: Yeah, so the first year of the tour we did I-35 as that is the obvious boundary of the city between east and west, not Congress, but I-35 is really the border. Um, and then it was to Lady Bird Lake, then up Airport. Yeah, then Airport back up to I-35.

SBS: Mmmmm, and um, are they still that way now?

SL: No, we expanded quite a bit, so the boundaries go up, still I-35, up to 183, I think 290, I can't remember without looking at a map, but basically 183, that big loop road that goes all the way down to, again, to the river and then down to um, Riverside now. It's our new southern, so now we go below the river.

SBS: Um, I'll probably come back to a little part of why maybe your boundaries have changed later. My next question is, do you actively do community outreach and if yes, how?

SL: Yeah. I mean we are, we are a learning and growing organization. We kind of at first didn't understand our position in the part of town that we are in when we were just kind of doing stuff and seeing what happened and slowly got to have a better knowledge of where we are, the history behind east Austin and um, the role that artists play in displacement and gentrification. You know at first, we were really just trying to engage all of the artists, celebrate the arts community, and try to bring more people to art. And now we spend more of our energy and time trying to have conversations around displacement and gentrification and art, and we try to really expand our outreach through organizations like Capital View Arts. They are one of our partners for 10 plus years now and we work with them to bring minority artists onto the tour. They're primarily focused on black artists, but they also do more outreach to other people of color. And that's just a way for us, to let the Studio Tour platform to engage with people who may feel like it's inaccessible and that there's barriers for entering their art. We still do charge a fee to be on the tour. It's gone up from \$35 to now \$175 so that is obviously a bigger sum, and we just do our best to provide opportunities for the people that we can. We have fellowship program that allows artists to apply for the tour and now have to pay the fee. We partner with the Austin Public Library and we try to engage with as many library branches as we can, and those, all the artist that show in the libraries get on the tour without having to pay a fee, just like all of the artist who show with Capital View Arts. We do engagement with the Carver Museum. So, we actively are trying to do work in the community by bringing in other community arts leaders and have them, you know reach out to their communities, because obviously we can only do so much as a small organization, but

also we only know so many people. We wanted to have other art leaders help us to connect and engage with their communities and their audiences.

SBS: Um, and then you were saying something the libraries that could join for free, does that also include when schools participate in EAST?

SL: Yes. Oftentimes schools. We have done some stuff with UT, trying to do more with HT. But then for the most part a lot of our engagement happens with like high schools or middle schools, or more often than not with elementary schools. And when they do get involved with the tour they do get on for free.

SBS: And then, um, why do you include school participation with the Studio Tour?

SL: Yeah, so the term Studio Tour. Even from day one didn't really encapsulate what it was because to this date the tour has always been about celebrating community and really what, how art happens in our community. So for us it was really important to include schools just because obvious through higher education. That's just our hope, that in our hopes you know, more students out of UT would stick, would stay in Austin, deepen their roots here and get involved in the art community, after they graduate or even before they graduate we want to have more engagement with you know college level artists who are in our city. Um, but as younger students are growing and coming up through the pipeline, we want them to be thinking about art and community and what it means to be an artist, and then oftentimes the teachers that are a part of these, um art programs at schools are artists in the community as well, so we are trying to connect those dots and tie, like really fully illustrate a picture of what Austin's art community is.

SBS: So would you consider school participation to be a partnership, a collaboration, or something else?

SL: I guess really a partnership. I mean I think we would love to do more collaborating with them. When I speak about collaboration coming from a past of being a collaborator in an art group, I think of it as a very closely tied working relationship where all parties have input and say. And really for the most part, with the school, we just are trying to create a platform that allows people to get involved and promote what they do, but we don't have a whole lot of, we aren't asking a lot of them, we aren't telling them to do it a certain way. We just want them to be involved and participating, so partnership.

SBS: Um, and can you tell me about the mission of the Studio Tours, if you have one?

SL: Yeah, I mean, Big Medium, we formed, the non-profit that we are, formed out of the East Austin Studio Tour. So a lot of what our mission is as an organization really speaks to the Studio Tour, but we don't have like a specific one for the tours. So our broader organizational mission is to basically to support artists. I mean if you just boil it down to the smallest little things it would be to support artists. And we do that through a few different approaches, but we are trying to provide opportunities for artists to create their

work through studios, encouraging them to have a studio practice, to exhibit their work and to talk about their work. We so often say that art can't be made in a bubble and that's why we think it's so important for artists to have these opportunities to talk to people on the tour or in our gallery, is that that community and conversation informs the artistic practice, so that's kind of the, kind the synthesized mission of the tours, to help artists create the work, help artists do their work, and engage them with an audience so they can talk about their work.

SBS: So, um, in a way. I have a question here asking if community outreach is a part of mission, and it sounds a little like community is important. I'm just wondering if you could elaborate on that.

SL: Yeah, I think it does tell, to speak to um, the need for art to, this is part of our mission, we have tons of mission statements, but um.. I can get into the non-profit, we can just rewrite it every year. Um, but you know what we believe is to be a progressive, tolerant, empathetic society art has to be incorporated into people's daily lives. So for us, it kind of it a, we want to bring everyone we can to the table. We want to bring everyone to art in some way or fashion, so for us we have to have some form of community engagement. We just see it as an inherent part of what we do and who we are to serve our mission so that we can bring more people to art and to engage with artists, so yeah.

SBS: Do you think that the community benefits from the East Austin Studio Tour?

SL: Um, yes, I do. I think that's a very complicated question, or the answer is complicated. Um, but in the most simplistic terms, yes.

SBS: Okay, go ahead.

SL: You broke down to community. If you break that down to communities and all the different subgroups that form the Austin community, that's good for some and not good for others.

SBS: Um, that's interesting. Um, do you think that the city of Austin itself benefits from having the East Austin Studio Tour?

SL: Yes.

SBS: And how?

SL: Well, it's the neck, I'm the driver so we are generating economic impact or creating economic impact, not only for the artists that participate but businesses in east Austin, um, who open their doors and see higher sales or higher traffic during the tour. Um, we've learned to monetize that for us as an organization, to have them, those local businesses, come onboard and support us financially because they see a return on that

investment by having more patrons come through their space. Um, and it generally speaks to the creative class of the city, which makes the city more attractive to corporations and to outside sources. So we can then drive more tourism to the city and then also more investment from those corporations to move here, like Apple, Samsung. I'm not saying that we are the only reason why, but we contribute to that and the culture of the city to make it an attractive place for you know, major corporations like Apple, they want to be in a creative city. To have the Studio Tour and South by and ACL and you bigger things like that happening just speaks to the creative culture of the city.

SBS: Does EAST or Big Medium receive any benefits from the city of Austin?

SL: Yeah, and this is to talk, to talk tax dollars which is state dictated but municipally administered through the Cultural Arts Division and those dollars are typically tied to tourism. I can't remember what the actual legislative language says, but for Austin and most municipalities it is a tourism-based, um, tax that is redistributed at the cultural and arts organizations. And either way we do still very much qualify for it, as I said earlier, we do drive tourism to the Studio Tour, so yeah, we receive that funding through the Cultural Arts Division.

SBS: How else is EAST funded?

SL: So it's the uh, the artists on the tour all still pay, not all, but a majority of them are paying that, kind of, we see it as the cost of doing business. For artists, it is a fee to market yourself, to put yourself out there and to sell your work. We don't talk about the Tour as this amazing like opportunity to sell your work, we really talk about it as a community building, networking, um, opportunity, because we do recognize that art sales happen. When you bring audiences together and you talk about your work and you develop your practice, but we're not trying to make it so focused on art sales. So anyway, so through the artist fees that participate, then we have corporate sponsors, um, we don't see them really as philanthropic giving through corporations, it's really more marketing. Corporations see the value of getting interest in the tour audiences, so you know, they buy in at one of our sponsor levels and they get certain perks, or logo placement or stuff like that. We produce a catalog for each tour, it's now a 200 some odd page book that represents all the artists and we sell advertisements in there. And then the business partners that I mentioned before, they are local restaurant and boutiques and retail shops that pay. That's probably the smallest bucket of the group. I think the artists themselves carry a majority of the load, corporations might come next in terms of their sponsorship, advertisers, business partners, and maybe somewhere at the top of that, maybe above corporate sponsors is individual giving. We have a membership program at Big Medium, and so it's not totally specifically tied to the Studio Tour, but it is generally, I think, leveraged by the Studio Tour because our catalog is a highly coveted item. Um, we tie our membership level to access to that catalog. We used to have them and give them away freely, we would use the library to just distribute those... The max that would we distribute was 10,000 catalogs that we produce each year and we distribute those through

the library branches, um and then we realized that we were giving away all of our money, and had to, had to you know pay our staff better, grow staff, grow our organizational capacity, so now we tie the catalog to membership within the organization. And that's yeah.

SBS: That makes sense. Um, so, when schools participate, do they experience any benefits from their participation?

SL: We think so. I mean, we survey our artists every year. I think when it comes to some of the schools, their engagement is an opportunity for their students, young and older, to put their work up and show it the neighborhood and community. And there's inherent positivity and benefit in doing that. Not only for just their practice, but you know for their self-esteem and talking about showing work and showing something that you created and having the, um, yeah I guess just the ability to do that and to put yourself out there does take, it is a, as an artist who has done this many times in the past, it is hard to put yourself out there so I think that is just a benefit for schools and those people individually. Um, I kind of hope that it shows a little bit of the power of art so that the school district and the higher education schools see it as a value for their programs and want to keep funding them at hopefully the level they are if not higher.

SBS: Um, and do schools receive any special perks from being involved, like funding, or would there be another outside motivation for schools to be involved with the Studio Tour?

SL: So in general, when you say schools, are you talking about all schools or are you thinking more specifically university level?

SBS: Specifically like the middle school and elementary schools that participate.

SL: Okay. Yeah, so I think at that level there is such an amazing opportunity for the students to take more field trips on the tour, that's something we have been trying to work towards. Again we have our organizational capacity limitations. The tour is a huge effort just to wrangle all the moving parts, so it is hard for us to take on more. I am overly ambitious and am constantly trying to take on more, but we just have a limit to what we can do, so we have been trying to develop some kind of field trip programs for the students who are on the tour to come out and see certain aspects. We have talked about schools who work with artists and do their own little adventures to take students out. Um, I think at the high school, or the middle school level we have seen quite a few students who have been assigned class assignment to go on the Tour and interview artists, which is the cutest thing I have ever seen, watching a nervous middle schooler walk up to you and ask you interview questions. Yeah, I just ah, I feel like it's such a, if you peel back the art side of it. Just to get students and children out in their city and experiencing something totally different and a new part of town, the tour takes you to a part of the city where you have never gone to because it's not a park or a store, it's a house in a

neighborhood where you just get to wander around and see the inside of some crazy studio.

SBS: Uh, yeah. Um, so have you visited the schools that are, like the elementary and middle school that are involved during EAST, to see their displays?

SL: We have been to some in the past, we try to get out, um, on the tour for as much of the tour as we can. Some years we get kind of bogged down in the logistics and have to stay on our computers, but I have been to some of the schools in the past. I think the most recent one was Texas School for the Blind, had a really awesome exhibition and I went to that one, I think it was last year.

SBS: What was that experience like, seeing their work?

SL: Oh, you know, the tour is a really interesting thing because as an artist and a person with subjective taste, not all art is great and that's part of my job as an artist and a curator to think about art and what makes art good, but there is something about seeing art that, in those environments, like it may not be my kind of art but it's just still amazing to see people put their creativity to use and make something and be so passionate about it. You know, look for affirmation or support and just like to see what that does to them to help them grow, you know, in their creative practice. There's so much to it that just way beyond whether the art is good or not or whether I like the art or not. So yeah, I love, I love going to see those exhibitions and talking with young kids, trying to, you know on one hand encourage them to be creative and do art but on the other hand trying to be realistic with them and talk about the need for business and other skills beyond art.

SBS: Um, so what is the process like for art teachers who want their school to participate?

SL: For the most part we've had decent relationships with most of the art teachers, so they know us and they talk about how they want to be on the Tour and we just work through the logistics with them. There are ways of getting involved without knowing us, they can just apply and jump onboard, um and those are also totally fine avenues. I think for us, we really want to have more connection with the artist who are on the tour, everyone who's on the tour so we hope to build those relationships and know them because it does take doing the tour a few times to really grasp it and have a good sense of it. And then, when we can talk with those teachers we can, you know talk about other ways that they can get involved and further that relationship.

SBS: Um, I'm going to switch gears a little here, how is the East Austin Studio Tour the same or different from an arts festival?

SL: Hmm.. what kind of art festival are you thinking? Like the, there's one that used to be downtown, who knows if it's ever coming back, Art City Austin.., like that or....

SBS: You know, I don't know that I have like a specific one, in general, I'm, really this question is to suss out, um, what kind of experience maybe could associate, um, if they've gone to a normal art festival, you know, a city-wide celebration, or just like a concentrated area in a city, um, just to see what's alike and what's different.

SL: Yeah, okay. Well this is um, me being sort of, not sort of, being crass. I see a lot of arts festivals, you know like Pecan Street or Art City Austin being a little bit of like a turkey leg festival where you know you kind of go and have this experiences of live music and you get a funnel cake and you eat a turkey leg, you see some art, you buy some cool Christmas presents or something. It's, it is a, it's very similar to a lot of those fair-type things, like the art is sort of an ancillary aspect of it. Sure, you are there because it's art and you like art, but it's such a different way of experiencing art than the Studio Tour because the Studio Tour is trying to provide, we hope, trying to provide not only the experience but a connection, an opportunity to, to know your city better, to know the artists who are in your city, to go to different parts of the city. Um, this is a, it's a, I think a whole, whole experience that is like really about what it means to be an Austinite. And not that you can't come here for the tour from other cities and have a similar experience, but it's, I just think there's something that's so rooted in understanding your community and understanding the kind of people that make work here and hopefully investing in that as opposed to an experience where it's more about you just taking and consuming. We see the Studio Tour more as, and it's not fully getting back, but it's there is more of a conversation, an interaction between the artists and the spaces and places that you visit on the tour, as opposed to this more transactional, just, I'm going to go to this thing and get this experience and to also more or less what your experience is going to be. The art festival, I can describe pretty clearly what the art festival experience is going to be, but I can't always, I can never explain everyone's Studio Tour experience because they're all so unique and you just never know what to expect.

SBS: Mmhmm, um, so would you consider the artwork shown in EAST to be community art?

SL: Well, it's... another very complicated question. Um, yes, because the Tour is meant to be as inclusive as possible. It's meant to be as representative of the community as it possibly can be, so with that as its focus, I would say that yes, it is community art.

SBS: Um, do you think that EAST and the gentrification of east Austin are related in any way?

SL: Yes.

SBS: And why?

SL: Well, it's no secret that developers follow artists and/or use artists, um so, we are part of that leading edge of change for cities. East Austin, from the 1928 plan that segregated the city all the way up until now has been on this trajectory to be where we are today, so to say that the artists, that we gentrified east Austin is incorrect, but to say that we were not a part of it is also incorrect. Um, you know the people who sell their houses to whomever that is part of the class change of the city or of the neighborhood they are also part of it. There's just so many moving parts and aspects of change, gentrification, displacement, not only from the people who are passively doing it, which I kind of believe the artist's stand. We don't stand to gain from gentrification, we actually stand to lose and suffer from it as well, um but we are passively involved in that process. Um, and then there's government agencies that, I think it goes all the way to the federal level, but at the state level, and then the municipal level, opportunities for economic investment and development in areas. It's in the city's best interest to maximize land value and to see gentrification happen in our city. So that's a little loom on the negative side of things. I think it's the reality that they larger forces that be have way more impact than artists do. Um, but again, that is very much my perspective as an artist and an artist organization. I know that a lot of other people believe that we are the leading edge and the majority cause for gentrification and displacement.

SBS: So how has the gentrification in east Austin affected the Studio Tour?

SL: Well, you know the obvious ones are the displacement of artists. Because the, and you know the forced perception is that artists are white and affluent and have the disposable incomes and can just do this fun hobby because we want to and not because we need to or our lives depend on it. So, you know, if you peel back those misconceptions and that misinformation that gets spread often you realize that artists are very at risk citizens of a city who don't have reliable dependable income, therefore when you see affordability change anywhere, as it changes across the city but more specifically in east Austin, our artists are displaced, which is very much why our boundaries for the Tour have changed so we can continue to grow the scope of the Tour to include those artists who are pushed more to the periphery.

SBS: I'm going to switch gears a little here, how was the Studio Tour the same or different this year due to COVID-19 and social distancing practices?

SL: This year's tour was a place holder. I'll explain. Yeah so we, after doing the East Austin Studio Tour for 10 years, yeah it was 10 years, we launched the West Austin Studio Tour, the other half of the interstate, the other half of the city, where we saw some really clear differences between them in terms of the artists who were participating and the artist who would come out, um, but this year we decided when the pandemic hit we had to cancel WEST, which takes place in the spring, so it was the first one to go. Um, and then as we ramped up for the fall, realizing that the pandemic was still going to be in place, we decided to combine EAST and WEST to an Austin-wide Studio Tour and make

it virtual. And we did have outdoor art as part of it, so we were really trying to get people off their computers and out into the city to go see public art. We partnered with Art in Public places which is a division of the Cultural Arts Division, um to look to identify some public art pieces around the city. We worked with artists who did murals, or have done murals, temporary installations, anything to get people out into the city, but also to have it be as socially distant as possible. So there was a variety of activities. A lot of artists wanted to set up outdoor markets and we just said, you can do that but it's not going to be part of our Studio Tour, just so that we, you know as we were watching the scientists talk about the second wave hitting in the fall, which it did, we just didn't want to be a part of that massive city wide spreading of it. So we did virtual and outdoor and it was very different. We realized that the Studio Tour is about connection and community and not about looking at art online.

SBS: So how do you feel like this year was impacted by this change?

SL: I mean, we were fortunate enough to have, I think a strong group of artists who were willing to invest in what we do. Um, to take part on the tour. Normally we have somewhere close to 550 artists who participate on EAST and then like 400 some odd artists who participate on WEST, there's a little bit of crossover, but if you peel that back there's around 800 artists total per year that we engage with, and this year for the Studio Tour we had 420 which is, you know, it is a huge thing that we had to address of like why these artists didn't want to participate, couldn't participate, you know whatever it was, we tried to lower the barrier for entry so that if any artist wanted to participate we reduced the fee or eliminated the fee so that was not a barrier for entry. But I just think a lot of artists just didn't understand the platform we were trying to do or had no interest in being a part of it, which is very understandable. I think for us the biggest thing was losing a huge chunk of artists that we try to serve each year and then the actual tour itself was strange and didn't, it felt like a place holder, like we are just saying, "Remember, this used to take place?", but what is happening is not even close to the same.

SBS: Well, hopefully that will not be the same next year.

SL: Yeah.

SBS: So, do you know if this impacted the school participation in the Studio Tour this year?

SL: Yes, I don't think we had a single school involved.

SBS: Are you currently working to have a WEST in the spring?

SL: No, we are looking to do another combined Austin Studio Tour in the fall of 2021, so it will, we don't quite know the logistics of an in-person Studio Tour that spans the whole city, um because the regionality of it is important. We want it to feel like there is density

and you're not driving all over Austin. The West Austin Studio Tour feels that way so, when you drive from MoPac down to William Cannon feels like you are just in the car all the time and not like you are seeing art. The East Austin Studio Tour feels like it has more density and that you can just jump on a bike and wander around, stumble around and just see art, so that's the beautiful part of it. Um, and then, so now when we are bringing the whole city together it's going to make it a little bit harder, but, we are working on those logistics. We just recognize that we're not going to be through the pandemic in the spring, um and as the vaccines are coming out, it's still, I don't know that we will be in the place to have an in-person event. We've have also been thinking about combining the tours for a while anyways, so this is kind of an excuse for us to try combining the tours in the fall with hopefully an in-person Studio Tour.

SBS: Is there anything else that you would like to add about the Tours or about school participation?

SL: Hmm.. I don't know, I mean I guess, in terms of school participation, like I think that there's a lot of work being done to do research around kids who engage with art and their academic success. And the data has been collected by a group called Mind Pop, which analyzed data across every student in Texas, and it just shows this very stunning data of what the arts do for students. Not in art, but outside of art, the academics across the board. Um, I participate in group called Texas and the Arts who actually took this data to um, I think it was two year ago, was it? To the legislative session and went to talk with our representatives, um that we tried to gather as many people to talk to as many representatives across the state of Texas just to show it to them and talk about the importance of art. Um, which is awesome and fun advocacy work, but it's just, you know it just illustrates how important it is for students who may not ever go into art to engage with art from an early age. And those who do want to go into art, I think there is no better thing to do than to talk to a working artist and to learn even the slightest thing about them or possibly develop a mentorship with an artist and really get a sense of what it means to pursue art as a career or a life. So, that's just my way of saying that we would love more schools to get involved and more students to be involved with the Tour because it's beneficial across the board.

SBS: So, I just had a thought, how, if a student on their own wanted to participate in the tour, and have their own kind of open house, they're available to do that?

SL: Yeah, the youngest artist on the tour, I think he's 7. He's been doing it for two or three tours now. Yeah, he just loves making art and wants to be on the tour, and his parents pay the fee. Oftentimes people will open up their home because some artists just work in their bedroom or their living room, so they'll just kind of turn their home into a temporary space, so you know any student could do that if their parents are willing to open up their doors to a bunch of strangers wandering around their house.

SBS: Awesome, I don't have any more questions, so unless there is anything else that you would like to add.

SL: I think that's it, I feel talked out.

SBS: (laughs) Okay.

SL: (laughs).

APPENDIX 2: KEALING ART EDUCATOR (Ms. X) INTERVIEW

Sarah Belle Selinger (SBS): Okay, perfect. Thank you so much. Okay, um well if you are ready, I will jump into questions.

Ms. X (MX): Yeah!

SBS: I don't want to take up too much of your time. So first and foremost, um, how long you been an art teacher?

MX: Um, 8 years.

SBS: 8 years?

MX: Yes.

SBS: And then what made you decide to become an art teacher?

MX: I'm actually, um, I actually have a bachelor's in animal science. I wanted to be a veterinarian. But life has a way of working itself out. You think you really want something and then you're kind of thankful when it doesn't work out later on, you know? Um, so I've always been an artist since I was about, like 7. I've always been an artist and I showed at galleries and venues before becoming a teacher. Um, and I didn't study it formally, um but again I was already, I already had a portfolio because I was showing, um, at galleries and um I just, I really love art and I love working with people. That's why I'm here talking with you. I love people, so. And I didn't know that, I actually didn't know that, um yeah.

SBS: Um, let's see so, so were you, how long have you been at Kealing Middle School then?

MX: 7 years.

SBS: 7 years.

MX: I started at a charter school, and that was like the foot, my foot into the door of art classroom, um, but I had to leave that place, um and find out a better position and so, yeah, I found Kealing and it's an amazing position. Um, it's kind of surprising that I got it because I don't have my bachelor's in art, um, while others do. But, at least like 8 years ago, 7 years ago, it was a rough neighborhood, and I, they gave me scenarios on how I would handle certain kids, um, and I just answered and they were impressed. Ah, but I can, I can, I can be nice and I can be strict and I can be rough, so yeah.

SBS: So how many years have you been participating in EAST as a school?

MX: As a school? I want to say 5 years. Or probably like, god, probably yeah, at least 5, at least. My 6 year I think or like, the first year I was with Black Shear Elementary. Um, she was welcoming teachers, um to join her so I was like, okay yeah, that sounds cool. But then, um, I really, really wanted to do it. Um, and it's a lot of, I guess it's just work. But, um, a lot more work for you to like facilitate an art show. Um, and to like go through the East Austin applications and what not. But it's um, again I'm an artist first, um, so I would do anything for art, if I could shoot it into my veins I would. So yeah.

SBS: So what prompted you to have an art class involved with EAST? You said that you were working with Black Shear, is that just where the inspiration started?

MX: No. I love, um, Black Shear was cool, but um. So I showed at galleries and venues, um so I have a really good idea of how it feels to already show at an actual show and have like family and friends come. It's um, it's absolutely rewarding, um it's exhilarating, I want to say. You get all nervous, you get dressed up, you like come show your product you know that you've been working on, you um. And it's just, I think East Austin Studio Tour is a, a solid, solid platform where um, students get to like be a part of that's really cool. A legitimate show, you know. It's not just like a Kealing show, it's a legitimate show. And like your artwork is in the brochure and then I get to give the one student that was like chosen their work. Because I have to submit like three and then EAST chooses one. So the one guy or the one girl that their work was chosen I, I give them the booklet of East Austin, and it's very rewarding. Um, so I think I got it from the fact that like I showed at galleries beforehand, yeah.

SBS: Um, let's see. Can you describe the level of student participation in the EAST show?

MX: Uh... the level? You mean the day of?

SBS: Yeah, so like, uh yeah how involved are they in the actual show that you that um is a part of EAST?

MX: So, um, I get to, I chose students who get to show, right? I would have students like, in each class there's 30 of them. At least like, 15 of them, are at least, and I have like, let's say, I have six classes, and if there's 30 I chose at least like 15 from each class to show their work. So there's um, I chose as many as I can to display their work. Um, and, then I have students that help me with projects, um with art activities that are going to take place at East Austin Studio Tour day. Um, but they could help me beforehand if they can't make it. They are like painting like, um, we get to make like a, like a Mona Lisa kind of painting with the face cut out, you know? Where you can just like take a picture with it. So many students will help me with like props and preparing activities beforehand if they can't make it. And then the day of, I of course have um, like a solid

like 10 helpers that come and they help me set-up to like to like to help me take down and help me run the show in a way, like um do some face painting or tell people about like a little booth, like what you can do, um , just like some art activities mostly like taking pictures with art work, um and then there's like um, like a huge, um like canvas where students already prepared like some, um a lot of line work drawing and visitors can just color it in. Um, so it's a lot of fun. I would have to say like, I don't know, probably like 70% of my students are really involved, the other 30 are like 'Meh", apathetic, they don't care.

SBS: That sounds like so much fun.

MX: Yeah, it's a lot of fun. It's too bad we are not going to have it this year.

SBS: Yeah. Um, speaking of that, do you have photos from years past that I could look at, perhaps use?

MX: From the events? You're going, I'm going to kill myself. Uh I actually don't have it. I, it's crazy because, um, someone brought it up to last year. And they're like, "You don't have anyone taking pictures?" and I'm like, "No". And I'm just running around like crazy.

SBS: Yeah.

MX: A security guard at Kealing was like, "Man, this stuff like you can have like a professional photographer here taking pictures of all the visitors and everything that is taking place". Um, and, I don't know what happened, I'm not sure why I didn't. Um, I think I just didn't cover all my bases, you know? Um, I... I

SBS: There was so much more of a priority in getting it ready.

MX: Yeah, yeah. So I was like, oh... I don't know. I thought like I am worried about marketing and that's why like, I... I think that East Austin Studio Tours is such a cool platform, but then at the same time I don't really take pictures. I actually do have like.... Huh. Um, no I don't really, it's not really picture so like I don't, I don't know, I'm so sorry.

SBS: It's okay! I was just wondering. I was planning to come to it and take photos myself until everything changed, you know. So now I'm just trying to pivot a little bit. Um, okay, so do your students like present their artwork at all when there, when there's this open house?

MX: No.

SBS: Or at any time? Okay.

MX: No, no, no, so this is truly like a gallery walk, you know. It's like an art show. Um, and, what students can do, is um, they will, they don't have to be there, I have like 10 solid people that help me, um, put everything up. But before the day takes place, I have everything already like done, and um, kind of prepared. I just need it to go up and then come down. Like the easels, or not the easels, I'm sorry. The portable walls that I made. The portable walls with the artwork. But, um, what students do is like they come with their parents and then they will stand by their work and be like, " I did this and this is what we did and then we, like, we're studying line and then we added value", and they get really happy. So they get to talk, like, they're not required to do anything other than like a true like gallery walk, in a way.

SBS: Mmhmm, um so let's see. Which grade levels so you feature the work from?

MX: Sixth, seventh, and eighth, all the grade[s] I teach.

SBS: All of them?

MX: Yeah.

SBS: Um... you told me that (to self)...

MX: I will try to choose eighth graders like, um, especially my advanced art class. But they will get chosen easily because their work is so strong. However, I will go the extra mile to be like, " I really want you to show because it's going to be their last year with me".

SBS: Mmhmm

MX: Yeah.

SBS: Let's see, I'm just going through some of these. You've answered some of these questions I had written. So do you pick a, do you ever pick a theme for the work that's displayed during EAST?

MX: No. I can't like necessarily afford that. We don't have the time for that. We just get to show what we are working in class on, which is, which is good. It's good work. I'm really proud of what we accomplish, so, yeah.

SBS: And then do you ever use like prompts for making the artwork?

MX: Prompt for making the artwork? What do you mean by that?

SBS: Yeah, so do you give them... So obviously you just show them what they are working on in class, so maybe what are the kinds of things, um, the kinds of assignments that they have made that you use for the EAST showcase?

MX: Alright, um, so there are um, so EAST usually takes place around November. Um, Dia de los Muertos, Day of the Dead, is um at the end of October and the beginning of November. It's like two days in Mexico that are celebrated. I'm not Mexican but I just like to implement culture into the classroom a lot. So, the students get to, we study a little but about that um, the Day of the Dead. I take them to the Mexi-Arte museum downtown, they get to pick um, some stuff from the shop as well. We have like a tour, um our own like private tour around that gallery. And um, in the classroom we get to make our own skulls out of clay. They're amazing I need to, I will send you some, (clears throat) Sorry, I will send you some pictures of it. I don't like to, well I'm going to toot my own horn, because it's so good that like, teachers that have been there for twenty years ask me how it's done. They're like, "wow, how do you make that?" and you know, so. The students get to make it by hand, it's not like a mold, and then um, and then once it's fired they get to paint it with acrylic and that's displayed in the art show. Um, there's another one that's "Zen-tangle", zen standing for meditation and tangle for patterns, they get to make a "Zen-tangle" drawing. Um, they draw animals and um, we draw animals using shapes, the just like basics of art but then we make them more organic, you know. We use geometric shapes and then make them more organic. Then we make it more realistic and then we get to, um, personalize it with patterns. It's a very relaxing, um, a relaxing project, it works for like anxiety, sadness, depression, and it's really nice. So, yeah, they have "Zen-tangles" they are going to make and then the other ones are Day of the Dead skulls, um, so yeah.

SBS: That sounds awesome.

MX: Yeah.

SBS: Okay, and you were describing this a little bit before, but what is the selection process for the artwork that you display?

MX: Um, the selection process, really if it's a strong composition, I will choose it. If it's a strong composition I will get it in there somehow. Um, and there are some students though that like isn't very strong, but they really want to be in it. I will choose theirs or I will like there's an array of artwork that each student makes. Like they could be making, because we're not only working on like one project over two or three months. If they have two or three projects, then I will try to choose one of them. Um, so mostly if it's a strong composition I will choose it.

SBS: Um, let's see. Do you ever correlate with any particular artists?

MX: Yes, I do. Not for the East Austin Studio Tour.

SBS: Sure.

MX: Yeah.

SBS: Let's see, do.. Do the students learn about the other artists that are involved in the East Austin Studio Tour?

MX: Um, actually, no they do not. They do not. They know that there are other artists, but they don't um. They like look through the brochure and can see. And some students have also like, because there are so many studios open around east Austin their parents will sometimes drop them off at Kealing and then they go walking to other ones and then they come back to me. But as far as me, like again, telling them about it, I don't. Um, I guess um, I don't know, I dropped the ball with that one too.

SBS: That's okay, these are just things that I was wondering.

MX: Yeah.

SBS: So, have you, so, this is probably not, but have you ever brought in local artists for preparing, um, the show?

MX: The East Austin Studio Tour?

SBS: Or any local artists, have you ever brought them in for classes?

MX: For, um. Yes I have. Um, for classes not to do with the East Austin Studio Tour but I do like to collaborate with other, our local artists. Um... what's his name? I can't remember, he's a.. um.. I brought in a graffiti artist from Austin about 7 years ago, or 6 years ago. Um, and I really liked the graffiti artist because it was something different. I appreciate graffiti, I'm from New York so I get to like um, I don't know, I was brought up with that type of art, um, and then there's some students that can connect with while others, you know, don't. But I liked him because he worked with troubled students and they made a mural in the back of the school. It was like a 30-foot mural. And then I brought in, um, Ethan Nowzarian. He's another Austin-based artist that we made like a 100-foot mural with the students, and it was a couple of months where we were working a lot. And I was there after school a lot, with students, with Ethan, I was there on weekends sometimes by myself. And then we had a huge show, or like a huge opening, um, so yeah.

SBS: That's awesome.

MX: Yeah.

SBS: Let's see, so do students have the opportunity to visit other artist studios for EAST during school hours?

MX: No. This East Austin Studio Tour show that takes place is on Saturday.

SBS: Mmhhh, yeah. Um, that makes sense then. To what degree do you explain what EAST is to your students?

MX: I guess I, um, to what degree? I don't know if want like a number, but I try to fully explain it to them. I will like go into the website, um, I go into the website, I'll show them the catalogue to all students, um, I will explain that all Austin, that all um, that all studios in east Austin can open up their doors for two weekends, and people around the state and even like outside the state come to visit. They go from studio to studio like eating cheese and drinking wine, maybe, and then like they get to see sculptures, ceramics, printmaking, drawing, sketching, and then I will show them some work, like the catalogue online in class. So, yeah, I fully explain it to them and that's why so many do get excited. And I can't believe I haven't had like an official photographer because that security guards was like, I remember, I had like a, we like order, not order, but we have to book a police officer for the day to man the door downstairs and, uh, the main Kealing doors because there is so many people coming in and out. Um, so there's a ton of visitors. It could be like 100 visitors, and sometimes they aren't even with the school, they are just doing the East Austin Studio Tour. Um, and there's a lot of kids, I feel last year was like, was it last year? Yeah, last year was the biggest and it was more than 100, probably at least 200 to 300 visitors throughout the like 4-hour show that we had, yeah.

SBS: So, you kind of mentioned this before, but do you know of any of the student's families that go and visit the artist studios during EAST?

MX: In particular? Yes, I do know some of them. They will tell me that they are going to go and see other studios. Parents that tend to be more crafty or artists themselves, part time, either are showing at it sometimes or they are just stopping by at like a friend's or a studio they know of.

SBS: Um, let's see. So you are present at the school during the Studio Tour open house?

MX: Yeah.

SBS: And you do see about how many students with their parents or guardians come in?

MX: Um, so, again, last year was my biggest and I think I get to like, um, every year gets better for me because obviously I learn more and more. If I were to do it this year, obviously I would have a photographer. But, um, I would say about 100 students came last year, um and so including like families, that's a lot because sometimes they will bring like aunts, uncles, grandma, grandpa, siblings, so yeah.

SBS: And then what do you feel like the response is like from the community?

MX: Uh, elaborate on community.

SBS: So like people living nearby the school perhaps, or just like people that wouldn't be connected to the school because of a student.

MX: Okay. They think it's neat. They do think it's neat. They get to see their work. They are kind of like surprised that they can do such work sometimes, like woah, that's really good. Um, but, yeah that's about it. Um, yeah, I think that's about it.

SBS: Do you think that your students feel a sense of pride from being involved in EAST?

MX: Absolutely. Yeah, absolutely. They get to bring their families and get to do like a legitimate show. I tell this, um, I'm like, "East Austin Studio Tour, this isn't like a school Kealing show, this is like a city one" and um, they take a lot of pride that they are in like catalogues and they're on websites, and uh, and what's happening in Austin, 512, things like that. They're in there and so they take a lot of pride in that, and also when they are applying to McCallum or to just other school and programs, they get to put the East Austin Studio Tour in their resumes. And they've asked me that a lot, like "How many years was I in it?", and I tell them and they are just like writing it down, um so yeah they take a lot of pride in it.

SBS: Um, okay. Do you feel that you experience, that like you personally, experience benefits from being involved with EAST?

MX: Uh, let's see my kids being involved in EAST?

SBS: You, as an art teacher.

MX: As an art teacher, do I get to experience the benefits of it? Um, yeah I get to experience the benefits of it. Just because, um, again, I love, I'm very surprised that I actually like people, but I do. You know, in college I was studying something that didn't have to do with people. Um, but I do get to experience the benefits of it because, um, I don't know, I get to see how, I get feedback from parents, from children, they're really excited, and that's really rewarding in itself, so yeah I, I get to, I get to experience their happiness, yeah.

SBS: Um, let's see. Do you think that the community, and speaking of the people around the school or in the east Austin community benefit from your school's involvement in EAST?

MX: Um.. oh. I'm not necessarily sure. I know East Austin Studio Tour, um, they really encourage me and schools every year to be a part of it, so I know that they benefit from it because they really, like, it's a community effort um and you can see it, see that. Um, so I think that yeah, the East Austin Studio Tour itself benefits from it, from having school involved, and being like a family friendly, and being inclusive of everyone, so yeah. I think they benefit from it.

SBS: Perfect. Okay, so do you think that the student involvement with the East Austin Studio Tour creates a safe place for your students in the community?

MX: A safe place to express themselves, yeah. A safe place to feel included, and a part of, as a part of the east Austin and Kealing community. I think that, yeah, provides that for them.

SBS: And, you've alluded to this a few times, but I'll just still ask. Do you think your students enjoy the engagement of participating in EAST?

MX: Most of them. Not all of them. Um, but most of them do. And I think that some of them don't, they're just being little, they're just being um, I want to spoiled but uh, "I have to do this?". I'm just like, "Whatever, you're so lucky, you're so lucky you have like a teacher that cares and that your stuff is picked, and stuff", and I just think they let it get to their head or something.

SBS: Um, so in your opinion, how do you think EAST will be different this year compared to years past?

MX: I don't think this year is going to take place. Um, East Austin, the Studio, it's just um I don't think it's going to take place. It's very different. First off, there's no physical galleries taking place, everything is online. And I don't think I'm, don't think I'm going to able to do it for the kids, at least successfully or without driving myself insane so I think I'm going to opt out this year because I'm, it's like a learning curve year. And we are working so much more, I feel like I'm working a lot more this year than other years. So, yeah, I think I'm going to opt out this year.

SBS: Yeah, that makes sense. Is there anything else that you would like to add about EAST or your experiences of facilitating art shows, or anything that you would like to add in general?

MX: Yeah, thank you for giving me the opportunity to do this interview, first off. It was cool, I love talking about making art, showing art, and because I consider myself an artist first, a teacher like eleventh. Um, but I think uh, I would encourage teachers in the future um to, to take place, to take a part in such shows. Um I think it does change the trajectory of some students, especially that uh appreciate art or really want to further their art career. And um, it gives like an experience to the kids that stays in their mind and kind of

plants a seed, it can do, it can have like a powerful um, it can be a powerful catalyst to their career, to their art career. Um, so yeah, I would encourage a lot of teachers to do this. Of course, it's a lot of extra work and no pay, but um, I mean, we're not in it for the pay anyway, so why not do it?

SBS: Yeah, totally, well thank you so much.

APPENDIX 3: STUDENT A* INTERVIEW

*name changed to protect minor confidentiality.

Sarah Belle Selinger (SBS): Okay. Well hi Student* and thank you for taking the time to talk to me today. I like your outfit.

Student A (SA): Thank you.

SBS: (laughs) Um, okay are you ready to start?

SA: Yeah, I think so.

SBS: Okay, well my first question is if you enjoy making art?

SA: Definitely!

SBS: And then, what do you enjoy about making art?

SA: Um.... Well that's actually a harder question to answer than I thought.

SBS: Well you can tell me about the kind of art that you make if you want.

SA: I would like to make comics and things like that and character art. I'm really interested in like the anime trendy kind of stuff. Um, so I think that's what really, like, where I started developing my own taste and style. But I think I mainly do character art and I've only more recently begun to do more scenery and stuff like that. (Be)cause I like to be able to like just draw these characters in my mind and like really draw their emotions and how I imagine them feeling and make up stories about them.

SBS: That sounds like a lot of fun.

SA: Yeah.

SBS: Okay, so we are going to talk about your school. On a scale of one to five, one being not at all and five being that you love it, how much do you like your school?

SA: Four.

SBS: A four? You really like it?

SA: Yes.

SBS: And why?

SA: I like it because I feel like there's enough weird people where I don't feel weird. Um, I like it because all of my teachers are very like informal and like unique and they teach in like a different way and you feel very comfortable talking to them. They're not very intimidating or anything like that.

SBS: That's awesome. Um, okay, so we are going to talk about EAST. Can you describe what EAST is?

SA: It's all the studios with the different artists showcasing their work.

SBS: Mmhmm. And I know things are kind of different this year than they have been in the past, but if it was possible would you like it for your artwork to be displayed during EAST?

SA: Definitely.

SBS: Yeah? Why would you like that?

SA: I feel like I don't really get to share my art a lot in many different ways. Like only really my family and sometimes my friends. So it would be cool to really have more people be able to see it and also more people to be able to have opinions on it. Like if I go to my mom and say how do you feel about this, of course she is going to say yes. And it's not like she is a master of knowing whether or not it's good so she's not going to have a critique for me. Or even my friends who I'm on par with, like, we're still even, so it's still like, a difference. So I think it would be cool to just have other strangers, normal people to be able to see my work.

SBS: Yeah, hold on a second. Sorry my neighbor [has] a motorcycle and sorry, it's really loud. Okay, so, and have you visited artists' studios in the past?

SA: Um, I went to the East Austin Studio Tours every year, but I don't know that I've ever been anywhere else.

SBS: Umm, that's okay. And, let's see. This kind of goes back to, um, the question we were talking about earlier, but do you like it when other people can see your artwork?

SA: In most cases, yes. I feel like sometimes I get a little vulnerable. Like right now I'm considering making an Instagram account public, and I don't, I'm still feeling very scared with that. Just (be)cause it's the internet and um, dangerous things, and I don't know what's going to happen, it just feels scary to me. But at the same time, it's like, like I want to share but it still is always um, a vulnerability that's a little hard to bare.

SBS: Yeah, definitely. Um, okay we are going to back to the school now. So, does your school feel like a safe place for you?

SA: Definitely.

SBS: Mmhhh. And are you happy while you're there?

SA: Yes. I think I feel very...free. And mainly if I'm in like, in some classes where I like know people, like I guess if I'm with like a bunch of kids in a kind of stereotype areas that I don't know then it's not. But for the most part. And like I said, there's enough weird people where I don't feel weird.

SBS: That's always good. I was weird.. I'm a weirdo too, so I appreciate that comment. So do you, um, feel like you belong to your school's community?

SA: Yes. I think so. And I'm in orchestra so that always helps to feel more community-like.

SBS: Yeah, definitely. And you're in art class too right?

SA: Yes, I was not in sixth grade though. So..

SBS: So.. go ahead.

SA: So I took beginning art in seventh grade. I didn't in sixth grade because I sacrificed it for Harry Potter class. Um, and then instead of going into intermediate art this year, I was put into advanced art.

SBS: Wonderful. And are you liking that class so far?

SA: Yes, definitely a lot.

SBS: What are you making?

SA: We are just starting with charcoal portraits, so we started drawing some facial features, eyes and noses. First, I thought I wouldn't be good at it because I have never really drawn much realistic, just (be)cause it's not much of what I want to do, it's not much that I care about, like what's the point of drawing something how it looks like if I can make it whatever I want it to look like. Um, but I was actually not bad at it and it was a lot of fun to see what I could do.

SBS: Awesome. Is there anything else you want to tell me about EAST or about artmaking?

SA: Um.. I don't think so.

SBS: No? Okay, well I think that's all the questions I have. I would love to see some of your art someday. It sounds really nice. And I hope you have a really great school year.

SA: Thank you.

SBS: You're welcome, thanks for talking to me [removed to protect confidentiality].

SA: You're welcome.

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